



**TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES ON FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE TEACHING
OF PRESCRIPTIVE LITERATURE IN GRADE 1**

by

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ABSTRACT

The current literacy statistics in the Foundation Phase remain a matter of great concern in South Africa. The country is currently experiencing the largest decline in literacy levels among the countries that participated in the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) in both 2016 and 2021. In the Foundation Phase, literacy is directly linked to acquiring and developing reading skills and the Foundation Phase curriculum for Home Language clearly outlines these outcomes. However, the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) focuses on ‘what to teach during reading’ but provides limited directives on the pedagogical practices for literacy teachers. Moreover, the policy statement lacks guidelines on the actual content of the books that must be used to develop literacy. This study aimed to collect data to determine what teachers’ perspectives were of the factors that influenced the way that they teach prescriptive literature in Grade 1. Furthermore, this study aimed to discover what the depictions and content of prescriptive literature in Grade 1 were and the teachers’ perspectives of such content, as well as how they interpret and implement CAPS in their teaching to gain a deeper understanding of the teachers’ lived experiences of teaching prescriptive literature in Grade 1. The researcher also explored how the teachers’ personal literacy journeys reflect how they teach children’s literature and how much training they had received in teaching literature in Grade 1. The study employed an interpretivist paradigm and data for this exploratory case study was collected through qualitative content analysis, a River of Life activity, a semi-structured interview, and a focus group interview. The data was analysed using Saldaña’s Coding method and was viewed through the lens of Social Justice. This study found that the Eurocentric content found in the prescriptive literature can be attributed to the dominance of Western knowledge systems that are enjoying carte blanche in the South African schooling system. As a result, Grade 1 teachers are teaching prescriptive literature that their learners cannot relate to culturally, nor does this literature consist of themes that can help them understand or confront issues in their current circumstances. The Western way of knowing, which is evident from the participants’ literacy journeys, has influenced the way that they apply their knowledge in pedagogy. This study has also found that teachers encounter several challenges as they are omitted from the decision-making process of selecting prescriptive literature for their classrooms. They are teaching prescriptive literature to learners from

poor socio-economic circumstances who seem to have lost a passion for reading. A lack of resources, sufficient space, overcrowded classrooms, poor parental involvement, language barriers, limited access to technology, and the fact that they need to use their personal funds to create resources, are factors that influence teaching prescriptive literature in Grade 1. This study highlighted educational inequalities, a socially biased curriculum, an unequal distribution of resources, the application of Western knowledge systems in the classroom, and a hegemonic Eurocentric canon in children's prescriptive literature, which is detrimental to the development of African knowledge systems and cultural consciousness. Since Indigenous knowledge systems are included in South Africa's National Curriculum Statements, this study is critical for future curriculum development as it recommends the equitable provision of relevant and updated Afrocentric children's literature for Grade 1 classrooms and the honouring of the literacy journeys of the teachers who teach this literature.

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KEY TERMS

ACRONYM	DEFINITION/EXPLANATION
ATP	Annual Teaching Plan
CAPS	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement
CTLI	Cape Teaching and Leadership Institute
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019 caused by the virus, SARS- CoV-2.
OBE	Outcomes Based Education
RNCS	Revised National Curriculum Statement

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CHAPTER 1

BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The current literacy statistics in the Foundation Phase remain a matter of great concern in South Africa (Govender & Hugo, 2020:2). According to the 2024 Reading Panel Background Report, it will take South Africa eighty-six years on the current trajectory to reach 95% of children who can read for meaning. In addition to the latter, and considering the COVID-19 pandemic, South Africa is currently experiencing the largest decline in literacy levels among the countries that participated in the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) in 2016 and 2021 (2023 Reading Panel Background Report, 2024).

In the Foundation Phase, literacy is directly linked to acquiring and developing the necessary reading skills to become fluent readers. The Foundation Phase curriculum for Home Language clearly outlines these outcomes. However, the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) focuses on 'what to teach during reading' (South Africa. Department of Basic Education, 2011:56-58) but provides limited directives on the pedagogical practices for literacy teachers. Moreover, the policy statement lacks guidelines on the actual content of the books that must be used to develop literacy.

The aforementioned is important because the development of literacy in the Foundation Phase is influenced by the pedagogical practices as well as the content of the literature that is taught. Literature is undoubtedly one of the most influential genres in teaching, and reading allows a learner to construct meaning, with literature often conveying messages about the learner's culture, cultural understandings, beliefs, settings and life experiences (Adam, Barratt-Pugh & Haig, 2019:551). Concerning pedagogy, Adam *et al.* (2019:554) signify the interaction between pedagogical practices, children's literature, and children's learning - and how learning depends on the knowledge, skills and judgement of the teacher. Cremin, Mottram, Bearne and Goodwin (2008:2) therefore assert that there is a vital connection between the

aforementioned and the teacher's professional knowledge, how they use children's literature in the classroom context and ultimately the text that they use to develop young readers. In order to address the existing state of affairs, emphasis needs to be placed on the teachers' knowledge of children's literature as well as the pedagogic use of children's literature in the classroom (Cremin *et al.*, 2008:1). Furthermore, if the content of the literature used to teach literacy does not reflect the culture or life experiences of the learners, it could also be problematic.

The purpose of this qualitative exploratory case study is to gain an in-depth understanding of the perspectives of Grade 1 teachers on the factors which influence teaching prescriptive children's literature in an inclusive and diverse educational setting in the Cape Winelands Education District. Evans, Joubert and Meier (2018:26) state that there is a serious misconception based on flawed assumptions that knowledge is created by assembling and memorising facts and that children learn nothing from children's literature. Eradicating such misconceptions and flawed assumptions within the educational setting is critical as this can be significantly detrimental to human development and additionally hinder progression in teaching literature.

1.2 Problem statement

For an extensive period, Grade 1 teachers' creative and innovative use of children's literature has been restricted by a centralised system, particularly concerning the selection of prescribed books for literature (Al Darwish, 2014:78). Fundamentally, this brings prescriptive children's literature, how it is taught, the utilization thereof, the content, as well as the challenges that may occur, under scrutiny. Given the significant role of the Grade 1 teacher as the mediator in the use of children's literature within the classroom context, teachers must continuously and consistently reflect on the practical implications of their pedagogical methods. It is critical to reflect on their personal literacy journeys as it might influence how they teach prescriptive literature. In light of the aforementioned, it then becomes pivotal to investigate the perspectives of Grade 1 teachers themselves to understand the meaning and perspectives they attach to their lived experiences of teaching literature in Grade 1. Furthermore, the type and content of prescriptive children's literature that they use, the training they received to teach prescriptive literature in Grade 1, how they perceive key objectives for Grade 1 as

outlined by the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), and ultimately the challenges that are experienced when teaching prescriptive literature in Grade 1, are important points to consider.

1.3 Research questions

What are the teachers' perspectives on factors that influence teaching prescriptive literature in Grade 1?

1.3.1 Sub-questions

- What are the depictions and content of prescriptive literature in Grade 1?
- What are the teachers' perspectives on the content of the prescriptive literature in Grade 1?
- How do Grade 1 teachers' personal literacy journeys reflect how they teach children's literature?
- What preparation or training did Grade 1 teachers receive to teach Grade 1 literature?
- How do Grade 1 teachers interpret CAPS and implement this in their teaching?
- What are the challenges experienced by teachers in teaching prescriptive literature in Grade 1?

1.4 Aims of the study

- To determine the teachers' perspectives on factors that influence teaching prescriptive literature in Grade 1.
- To determine the depictions and content of prescriptive literature in Grade 1.
- To determine the teachers' perspectives on the content of the prescriptive literature in Grade 1.
- To determine how Grade 1 teachers' personal literacy journeys reflect how they teach children's literature.
- To determine what preparation or training teachers received specifically to teach literature in Grade 1.
- To determine how teachers interpret CAPS and implement this in their teaching.

- To determine the challenges experienced by teachers in teaching prescriptive literature in Grade 1.

1.5 Review of literature

The purpose of this literature review is to define the concept of children's literature and gain an understanding of the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement for Home Language in the Foundation Phase. Furthermore, this review scrutinizes the voices of African scholars in a quest to understand the pre-eminence of Eurocentric culture and Western epistemology. The Social Justice theory will be outlined as a philosophy of social change and will be the theory that underpins this study. As suggested by McMillan and Schumacher (2001:111) only theories, studies and practices that are relevant to the problem statement will be articulated in this review and Chapter 2. This study employs a thematic literature review with a particular focus on various perspectives, wherein the grouping of literature is guided by a specific theme.

1.5.1 Defining children's literature

As a point of departure, Evans *et al.* (2018:26) state that children's literature is a more complex topic as suggested by various scholars. The term is used to describe literature in the form of a book, particularly written for children, and is easily recognizable by a specific appearance (Evans *et al.*, 2018:3). However, it is imperative to comprehend that children's literature is a unique genre consisting of folk tales, fairytales, myths and legends, rhymes and poems, fantasy, school stories, fables, religious texts, comic books, graphic novels, plays and biographies (Evans *et al.*, 2018:112-128). Pires (2011:253) concurs and particularly categorizes tales, rhymes, nursery rhymes and legends as traditional texts.

Pires (2011:253) emphasizes that children's literature is a fundamental component of pedagogical activities that needs to include how African people and descendants were treated. This should be accomplished in a quest to develop diversity and build the children's identities. Adam *et al.* (2019:551) affirm the aforementioned and state that children's literature is a powerful text that ought to assist children in understanding their identity, community and families. Additionally, it should broaden their understanding of

the world and entail encounters that they can relate to. Crippen (2012) attests and states that children's literature provides an avenue for children to learn about their cultural heritage and the cultures of other people. The aforementioned author further emphasizes the essentiality of children learning these values because developing positive attitudes toward our own culture and the cultures of others is a necessity for personal as well as social development.

Crippen (2012) also raises a pertinent point for this study which states that we must be cautious when teaching children about the cultural heritage of others and devote particular attention to selecting books to recommend to young children. She avers that *"there are many stories, some folktales, which contain blatant stereotypes and inaccuracies about certain cultural groups"* (Crippen, 2012). Since this genre can contribute immensely towards the holistic development of the child, it is also essential to choose age-appropriate children's literature in the educational setting. According to the South African schooling curriculum, beginner readers vary from age 5 – 9 years which places them in the Foundation Phase (Department of Basic Education, 2011). The Foundation Phase primarily includes Grade R, which is also known as the reception year and includes Grades 1, 2 and 3 (Joubert, Bester, Meier & Evans, 2014:309).

Research has found that teaching and reading literature to children, especially in the early years, is one of the most important activities for developing the knowledge required for eventual success in academics (Kalb & van Ours, 2021:2). From the earliest formal school year, children are exposed to children's literature, mainly books, which are prescribed by office-based staff members of an education district. These lists are considered essential materials to teach children's literature and also to achieve academic success. Notwithstanding the guidelines that are provided by the department, it remains paramount to comprehend that the teacher's approach to the literature and her/his representation of the subject, theme, motifs and main characters of the book are essential for the development of the child.

1.5.2 Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement: Foundation Phase Home Language Grade R – 3

The Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) is a comprehensive policy document set out by the Department of Basic Education for subjects listed in the National Curriculum Statement, Grade R – 12. In the Foundation Phase (Grade R - 3) teachers are expected to teach four subjects, namely, Mathematics, Life Skills, Home Language and First Additional Language. The CAPS policy document outlines a clear directive on the time allocation per subject, aims, skills that need to be developed, key content areas as well as the weighting of content areas (South Africa. Department of Basic Education, 2011). For this research study, the focus is placed on the Home Language and the various reading components within the specific subject. Home Language in Grade 1 is divided into four different components, namely, Listening and Speaking, Reading and Phonics, Handwriting, and Writing. The total time allocation for Reading and Phonics is 4 hours and 30 minutes per week (South Africa. Department of Basic Education, 2011:9). Shared Reading, Group Guided Reading, Paired and Independent Reading, and Phonics must be included daily in a focused lesson (South Africa. Department of Basic Education, 2011:11). Even though the CAPS document is very clear on what needs to be executed, diminutive information is being provided on the specific depiction that needs to be brought forth in Grade 1 literature. It is however paramount to note that the aims of the policy document are guided by the legislation and address matters of *"Human rights, inclusivity, environmental and social justice: infusing the principles and practices of social and environmental justice and human rights as defined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. The National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12 is sensitive to issues of diversity such as poverty, inequality, race, gender, language, age, disability and other factors that include valuing indigenous knowledge systems: acknowledging the rich history and heritage of this country"* (South Africa. Department of Basic Education, 2011:5).

According to Copland, Garton and Burns (2014:2), policy decisions are a very complex decision-making process and state that one of the aspects affecting young learner classrooms concerns pedagogy. Furthermore, linked to policies about pedagogy is the challenge of resources. Du Plessis and Mestry (2019:1) highlight plenty of challenges that hinder policy implementation which include a lack of resources, lack of parental

interest in children's education, insufficient funding from the state, underqualified teachers, and multi-grade teaching. Primarily, the aforementioned are potential factors that can influence how prescriptive literature in Grade 1 is taught as well as how the CAPS curriculum is interpreted and ultimately implemented by Grade 1 teachers. These potential factors were examined in this research study.

1.5.3 Theoretical framework

The Eurocentric approach to teaching literature being dominant in schools today (Mahabeer, 2020:4), seeks interrogation within the African context where Grade 1 teachers teach. This study used the Social Justice theory to interrogate the Western or Eurocentric epistemology that is found, not only in the teaching but also in the content and depictions of children's literature in Grade 1. Moreover, teachers' perspectives on the Western knowledge system are examined by investigating the teachers' own personal literacy journeys and how they interpret and teach prescriptive literature according to CAPS. Essentially, this study probed into the challenges faced by Grade 1 teachers when teaching prescriptive literature. The reason for this investigation and why it is important for the study lies in the aim of this study, which is to determine the factors that influence teaching prescriptive literature in Grade 1 from the perspective of the 'teacher voice'.

1.5.4 Western epistemology

To understand teachers' perspectives on teaching prescriptive literature in Grade 1, it is important to determine what and how Western epistemology impacts their perspectives and practice. Unpacking epistemology, du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.* (2014:23) define the term as the study of knowledge, the nature thereof and different ways of knowing. According to Abdi (2006:16), it is also the examination of theories and knowledge produced. The term 'Western' refers to the European civilization that constituted a new and modern world system, whose architecture was constructed in a way that subjugated the other parts of the world (Ndlovu, 2014:86).

According to Abdi (2006:20), the arrival of this new world system on the African continent established the supremacy of the European worldview. It is essential to note

that this reconstruction was accompanied by colonial education and Western epistemic domination (Ndlovu, 2014:86). Buntu (2013:7) expresses concern that Western education transmits a culture in stark opposition to what would have been transmitted from an African worldview. Heleta (2018:51) affirms and further elaborates that Eurocentric ideologies and worldviews are designed to inculcate inferiority to African knowledge systems. In the educational setting, the aforementioned transmission would ideally be parcelled and presented in the form of textbooks, curricula, and educational resources. Henceforth, Buntu (2013:7) highlights the neglect of African epistemology in the educational setting and asserts that facilitating this transmission indisputably includes children's literature such as fables, myths, legends and proverbs.

According to Abdi (2008:309), the transmission of Western culture has resulted in Eurocentric hegemony, which has been prolonged in post-colonial South Africa, where African worldviews and ways of knowing have been marginalized for an extensive period. Ndlovu (2014:85) affirms the aforementioned and suggests that indigenous knowledge needs to be rescued from Eurocentric views to respond to African-based challenges that include respect for unique African humanness. Hence, it is essential to comprehend the pragmatic relationship between culture, education and the development thereof on the African continent (Abdi, 2006:28). The Social Justice theory thus becomes relevant to the study as it entails voices of the oppressed that could address past injustices within the educational setting.

1.5.5 Social Justice theory

A theory can be described as a systematic description of concepts and constructs that enables a deeper understanding of a phenomenon (du Plooy-Cilliers, *et al.*, 2014:37). The theoretical framework refers to a collection of thoughts and theories that relate to the identified phenomenon (du Plooy-Cilliers, *et al.*, 2014:55). This study proposes that the Social Justice theory is a way of explaining the teachers' perspectives and the educational injustices Grade 1 teachers are confronted with. John Rawl's concept of social justice serves as the theoretical framework for this study.

Even though there is no fixed term to define social justice, Hlalele (2012:111) states that social justice is a humanizing process that is constituted of struggles that

circumvent any means that seek to uphold exclusionary praxis. According to Woods, (2018:2), social justice refers to efforts encouraging equity and recognizing diversity within a framework of human rights. As a point of departure, it is paramount to comprehend that Colonialism, as well as Apartheid, shaped the advancement of injustices in South Africa that led to the marginalization of certain groups (Patel, 2009:66). Therefore, social justice prioritizes equity as opposed to equality, which means that everyone should have access to the resources they need to participate in and gain equally from society. (Woods, 2018:2).

Flessner and Payne (2017:2) bring the latter into a schooling context and state that the work and efforts of the educator must entail elements of social justice and equity, that should be ingrained in not only the school or classroom but specifically the curriculum. However, in the South African context, the country is still faced with multiple societal injustices that ultimately hinder educational progress. Hölscher (2014:23) avers that challenges to social justice are constituted by social positions, socio-economic inequalities, economic inequality and power relations, which privilege some groups while marginalizing, disadvantaging, and excluding other groups. It is therefore pertinent to attend to unequal social systems in which schools are set (Flessner & Payne, 2017:4) and the Western content teachers are compelled to teach in a Southern African context.

Hlalele (2012:113) therefore suggests that the objective of promoting the theory of Social Justice would be to reduce and eradicate oppression in all forms. This necessitates that the privileges of certain dominant groups should be recalibrated and readjusted to achieve fairness and equality (Woods, 2018:2). Frey and Blinne (2017:4) argue from a pragmatic perspective and state that unjust discourses can be addressed by communicating about them. The latter was accomplished in this research study in which consultative, participative, collective and empowering processes (Hlalele, 2012:113) were utilized to address the phenomenon being examined.

1.6 Research design and methodology

The framework used to conduct this research study is a qualitative approach complemented by a case study research design. Underpinned in an interpretive

paradigm, the inquiry delved into the lived experiences of the participants that ultimately answered the research questions.

1.6.1 Research design

A case study research design was employed in a quest to explore richly textured contextual knowledge that would be able to provide a detailed and profound analysis of the topic under study. Guided by the aim, purpose and objective of the study, a qualitative approach, complemented by a case study research design produced descriptive data with a particular focus on real-life experiences (Brynard, Hanekom & Brynard, 2014:39). Since the purpose of the study was to gain insight into the lived experiences of Grade 1 teachers and understanding the meaning and perspectives they attach to teaching literature, an exploratory case study research design was suited to this study. Henning (2004:41) and du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.* (2014:179) affirm that a case study research design is typically employed to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and those involved. Consequently, this design became a suitable approach as it allowed me to explore within context, by gaining an understanding of the lived experiences of the participants. Ishak and Abu Bakar (2014:31-32) concur that a case study can be a sufficient and appropriate design to explain a certain phenomenon.

1.6.2 Methodology

The methodology that was employed for this study was qualitative and underpinned by an interpretivist paradigm. An interpretivist paradigm refers to gaining an in-depth understanding of meaningful daily life experiences that describe meaningful social action (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.*, 2014:280). According to Earthy and Cronin (2008:1), a qualitative approach has a long-standing relation with social research.

1.6.3 Site selection

The research study took place in the Breede River Valley sub-region of the Boland in the Western Cape, where the selected schools categorically fell under the Cape Winelands Education District. This research site was purposefully identified as it was

anticipated to provide participants who met the characteristics of the study. Three public schools were identified in Circuit Four, based on proximity and participant characteristics that suited the purpose of the study. These schools were decisively identified due to being low-resourced schools which was a more accurate reflection of the state of the majority of public schools in South Africa. Data were collected within the classroom context of two Quintile 1 schools (NQ1) in the Worcester area.

Research indicates that schools in lower quintiles (no-fee paying schools) tend to achieve lower academic scores (Ogbonnaya & Awuah, 2019:8). Since the effective teaching of literature is instrumental to life-long academic achievement, schools in Quintile 1 were selected to investigate teachers' perspectives on factors that influence teaching prescriptive literature in the first formal school year.

It was anticipated that data collected in the classroom context would enable the participants to explore complex processes concerning their practice and produce a richer understanding of their culture, beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviours and feelings, which would consequently construct their perspective.

1.6.4 Participant selection

The population refers to all the persons who will be the focus of the study. Fundamentally, the population for this study was guided by the research question and the problem statement.

A non-probability sampling method was employed, and purposive convenience sampling was done. Information-rich key informants who were knowledgeable and could produce informative data on the phenomenon under study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:401) were recruited. The sampling criteria for the participants in this study were:

- Teachers had to be from the selected Quintile 1 schools,
- Characteristics primarily included being a Grade 1 teacher,
- of 30 years and older,
- teaching in the Cape Winelands Education District

The 30 years+ cohort has the advantage of a minimum of 5 years of teaching experience, and it was envisioned that they would understand the responsibility that their responses could make an impact on curriculum development. It was also anticipated that this cohort had developed an interest in making contributions and an understanding that their participation could assist in shaping what takes place in the educational setting.

1.6.5 Data collection

The methods that were utilized to collect data entailed a qualitative content analysis, a River of Life activity, a semi-structured interview, and a focus group. By applying these qualitative data collection methods, the richness and depth of the data collected, in the specific social context, were ensured (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.*, 2014:173). As a result, the research study produced contextually rich data that included visual narratives, book depictions, and verbatim transcriptions.

1.6.5.1 Qualitative content analysis

Qualitative content analysis is defined as a data collection method where subjective interpretation of the text can be done through a systematic coding process and identification of themes or patterns (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.*, 2014:258). The emphasis of this content analysis was on the textual content as well as the visual narratives depicted in Grade 1 prescriptive books that are selected to teach reading.

1.6.5.2 River of Life

The River of Life method can be defined as a data collection technique where visual narratives are used to help people tell stories of the past, present and future (Fisher & White, 2018). The technique is introduced as a visual platform, which takes the shape of a river drawing, where participants can identify their roles, how they fit in the bigger picture and where they can make the most impact. The river presents a timeline of visual drawings where the 'big picture' or the 'whole story' of participants can be

scrutinized. The River of Life data collection method was used to collect data from the participants regarding their personal literacy journeys.

The use of this method was relevant for the study as narratives provide a platform for expression and representation in studies relating to social sciences (Henning, 2004:122). The method was therefore suited to this study as it is a metaphorical way of introducing unknown aspects of participants. Additionally, it symbolises life-defining milestones (Arivananthan, 2011) that contribute to the perspectives of the participants.

1.6.5.3 Semi-structured interview

As defined by Baškarada (2014:8), a semi-structured interview is a flexible data collection method that allowed me to gain a comprehensive understanding of the participants' perspectives. Given the latter, and since qualitative interviewing requires asking open-ended questions, I developed a comprehensive set of open-ended questions to collect the data required. This method allowed me to refocus questions or prompt for more information if interesting responses emerged. An additional advantage of utilizing this data collection method was that I had control over the line of questioning.

1.6.5.4 Focus group

According to Gundumogula (2021:299), the use of focus group discussions as a data collection method in qualitative research has increased in the past decade. Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.* (2014:183) describe a focus group as a group interview where participants are interviewed simultaneously in a natural but structured way. As demonstrated in this research study, this data collection method was particularly useful as a complement to other data collection methods.

1.6.6 Data analysis

McMillan and Schumacher (2001:462) define data analysis as a continuous cyclical process that is integrated into all phases of qualitative research. Onwuegbuzie, Frels and Hwang (2016:146) suggest that the Saldaña Coding method is a suitable method

of data analysis for novice researchers, particularly those who will engage in social research. The model for data analysis of this research study was, therefore, the Saldaña's Coding method (Saldana, 2013).

According to Creswell (2014:197), coding is concerned with a process of organising the data by bracketing text and writing a word representing a category in the respective margins. However, a code in a qualitative inquiry is a short phrase or word that symbolically assigns summative attributes to language-based or visual data (Saldaña, 2013:3). As a point of departure, Saldaña (2013:14) cautions researchers not to mistake themes for codes. The author further clarifies that a theme is an outcome of coding and that it ought to produce rich discoveries through specific coding methods, which explore phenomena such as emotions and values. Data to be coded may consist of interview transcripts, drawings, participant observation field notes and literature (Saldaña, 2013:3). The latter particularly renders this data analysis method suitable for this study.

Onwuegbuzie *et al.* (2016:146) outline a six-stage framework for novice researchers, primarily identifying and extracting relevant works from the data collected, followed by a process of analyzing and synthesising these data sets. I then determined which subsets of the works to code as well as the components of the work selected. Subsequently, I determined which of the 32 codes of the Saldaña Coding methods would be applied. I opted for thematic coding (Onwuegbuzie *et al.*, 2016:135). Lastly, cross-case analysis was conducted of the inferences that emerged from the coding process. The inferences refer to categories, sub-themes, themes and meta-themes (Onwuegbuzie *et al.*, 2016:146). Utilizing the Saldaña Coding method enabled me to understand social reality in a subjective manner rather than a scientific manner.

1.6.7 Trustworthiness

Creswell (2014:201) states that to ensure qualitative validity, the researcher needs to check the accuracy of findings and that qualitative reliability is concerned with the consistency of the researcher's approach across different projects. Conversely, du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.* (2014:258) advise that there is an overarching term that is used for validity and reliability in qualitative studies, namely, trustworthiness. Trustworthiness

consists of sub-divisions, namely, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, in Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.*, 2014:258).

1.6.8 Credibility

According to du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.* (2014:258), credibility refers to the accuracy with which the researcher interprets the data collected from participants. Given the data collection methods utilized, the credibility of this research study was increased as I spent long periods with the participants in a quest to gain insight into their lives and lived experiences. All efforts were made to interpret the data collected in such a way that it is believable from the participants' perspective.

1.6.8.1 Transferability

Transferability refers to the findings being applied to similar situations and delivering parallel results (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.*, 2014:258). In essence, it implies the extent to which the results, as well as the analysis, can be utilized beyond this specific research study. Since the study could not be generalized to the larger population, ensuring transferability allowed this approach to lend itself to generalised findings.

1.6.8.2 Dependability

Dependability raises matters referring to the quality of the process of integration between the data collection methods, data analysis and the theory selected (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.*, 2014:259). The data collection methods used in this research study enabled data collection from Foundation Phase teachers, by gaining insights through narratives as well as visual narratives. As a result, Saldaña's Coding methods were applied to analyse the data collected. Since I conducted a qualitative content analysis, this method of data analysis allowed analysis of visual data through a holistic and interpretive lens (Saldaña, 2013:52). Since the study sought to investigate the teachers' perspectives in an educationally unjust society, and given the interpretive paradigm employed, the Social Justice theory was suitable and well-integrated in this research study. Therefore, dependability was ensured since the three components that

form the cornerstones of dependability in a qualitative research study were appropriately integrated.

1.6.8.3 Confirmability

du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.* (2014:259) state that confirmability refers to how well the data collected supports the findings and interpretations of the researcher. Since confirmability indicates how well the findings and interpretations flow from the data collected, it was imperative to describe the research process meticulously in Chapter 3.

1.6.9 Triangulation

With the focus on increasing the aforementioned sub-divisions of trustworthiness, triangulation was applied. According to Creswell (2014:201), triangulation involves different sources of information whereby evidence is examined and used to build a coherent justification for themes. Creswell (2014:201) recommends utilizing different approaches as this enhances the researcher's ability to assess the accuracy of the findings. McMillan and Schumacher (2001:408) therefore stress the fact that multi-method strategies do permit triangulation. Therefore, a combination of three strategies was employed to enhance trustworthiness in the data collection process. This included the use of multi-method strategies, mechanically recorded data and participant verbatim language (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:408).

1.7 The researcher's position

With the commencement of the data collection process, my position was to undertake the role of a facilitator, particularly due to the River of Life data collection activity. In the final step of the data collection process, semi-structured interviews were conducted where my role changed to being the interviewer. Creswell (2014:201) describes these roles in general as the researcher being the inquirer, typically involved in a sustained and intensive experience with participants. It is, however, paramount to comprehend that my involvement was minimal for the interviewees' narratives to flow (Earthy & Cronin, 2008:8).

Concerning my role and mitigating bias, I am not an employee of the Western Cape Education Department hence I did not foresee any influences that could hinder objectivity or jeopardise the interpretation of the data collected. Essentially, I refrained from allowing any biases that I may have had to cloud the analysis of my data.

1.8 Ethical considerations

McMillan and Schumacher (2001:195) emphasize the significance of understanding ethical and legal responsibility in research, particularly educational research since it involves human beings. For this study to commence, permission was granted by various authorities that included the Department of Basic Education, the Cape Winelands Education District, the three NQ1 schools identified as well as the participants.

When research is undertaken, it is of paramount importance that the participants are comprehensively informed of expectations during the study, how outcomes will be used and published, as well as how their identities will be protected (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.*, 2014:264). These aspects were thoroughly clarified before the commencement of the data collection process. With written informed consent from the participants, I comprehensively explained how confidentiality would be protected and how privacy would be maintained. Participants were provided with the option to have all the information translated into a language that they understood.

Confidentiality refers to a condition where the identities of the participants are known to the researcher but will not be disclosed or discovered by others (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.*, 2014:267). Regarding the latter, I used pseudonyms and unique identifiers. All data collected were kept strictly confidential. Moreover, all documented data were stored using a computer-protected password and safely stored at a residential address.

It was stipulated that participation in the study was solely voluntary and should the participants have wished to withdraw at any stage of the study, the participants were at liberty to do so. Respect for the participants' welfare and human dignity was highly regarded at all times. No harm was done to the participants at any stage of the data collection process and risks were mitigated.

To demonstrate that I accepted and adhered to the ethical standards outlined by CPUT and the broader research community, an ethical clearance application was submitted to the Education Faculty Ethics Committee (EFEC). The data collection process only commenced once ethical clearance had been granted by the institution and the aforementioned authority figures.

1.9 Contributions of the study

This study sought to build knowledge that could contribute to selecting, evaluating and teaching children's literature and inform curriculum development in the Foundation Phase (§5.12). It attempted to raise public awareness of the significance of choosing suitable children's literature in the Foundation Phase classroom context (§5.12; §5.12.1) that could substantially contribute to the holistic development of South African children (§5.13).

1.10 Chapter division

Chapter 1: Background / Introduction

Chapter 2: Literature review / Theory

Chapter 3: Methodology

Chapter 4: Empirical results and discussion

Chapter 5: Conclusion and recommendations

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The literature review provides an understanding of the literary theory underlying the prescribed Foundation Phase children's literature. I established certain basic concepts of children's literature that were relevant to this research study. The latter is overtly imperative because the purpose of the study lies in the determining factors that influence teaching prescriptive literature in Grade 1. Teachers' perspectives on the latter were investigated through the teachers' own personal literacy journeys, qualitative content analysis on prescriptive literature in Grade 1 and how teachers interpret and teach prescriptive literature according to CAPS. Since the National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12 (consisting of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy for Home Languages, Grades R-3) guides teaching and learning in the schooling curriculum in South Africa, a brief outline of the literature taught in Grade 1, according to the said CAPS for Home Language, is provided.

According to Mahabeer (2020:4), the Western, Eurocentric approach to teaching literature is very dominant in schools until now, as a result of a Western curriculum. This study is therefore underpinned in social justice to interrogate the Western epistemology that is observed in the teaching of children's literature in Grade 1. This is essential to investigate, particularly within the African context where Grade 1 teachers are introducing children's literature. Accordingly, this study is informed by the Social Justice theory of John Rawls titled, *A Theory of Justice* (1971). As a counter approach to Western epistemology, this literature review develops an understanding of the concept of social justice and its relation to education. The literature overview does not only seek to provide an understanding of social justice but also aims to develop an understanding of principles associated with social justice which are equality, distribution, and fairness. Ultimately, the objective is to demonstrate how the Social Justice theory can respond to hegemonic Western epistemology observed in the educational setting. Concepts of social justice presented in the theory of Rawls play an important role in decreasing ostracism and exclusionary praxis in Grade 1.

2.2 Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) - Foundation Phase Home Language Grade R – 3

The South African schooling curriculum has undergone a plethora of rapid curriculum transitions since democracy (Govender & Hugo, 2018:17). The Christian National Education curriculum was changed to Outcomes-based Education (OBE) in 1997, which was then replaced by the Revised National Curriculum in Statement (RNCS) in 2002. Subsequently, in 2007, the new National Curriculum Statement (NCS) became the guiding policy, which then paved the way for the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), which was introduced in 2012. However, the history of CAPS is not relevant to this discussion but rather the content and guidelines concerning children's literature in Grade 1.

The Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) is a comprehensive policy document set out by the Department of Basic Education for subjects listed in the National Curriculum Statement, Grade R – 12. It is paramount to note that the aims of the policy document are guided by legislation and address matters of *"Human rights, inclusivity, environmental and social justice: infusing the principles and practices of social and environmental justice and human rights as defined in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa. The National Curriculum Statement Grades R-12 is sensitive to issues of diversity such as poverty, inequality, race, gender, language, age, disability, and other factors that include valuing indigenous knowledge systems: acknowledging the rich history and heritage of this country"* (South Africa. Department of Basic Education, 2011:5).

According to Copland, Garton & Burns (2014:2), policy decisions are a very complex decision-making process and state that aspects affecting young learner classrooms are pedagogy and policy implementation. Makeleni and Sethusha (2014:104) aver that there are fundamental principles set out by the Department of Basic Education concerning the implementation of policy which include teaching in a healthy environment, social justice, human rights, inclusivity, and accessibility.

In the Foundation Phase (Grade R - 3), teachers are expected to teach four subjects, namely, Mathematics, Life Skills, First Additional Language and Home Language

(South Africa. Department of Basic Education, 2011). Home Language in Grade 1 is divided into four different components, titled, Listening and Speaking, Reading and Phonics, Handwriting, and Writing. According to Makeleni and Sethusha (2014:103), Foundation Phase teachers have been experiencing abrupt and swift curriculum changes in recent years due to an increase in global knowledge, skills and technology.

For this literature review, the focus is specifically placed on the Home Language and the various reading components within the specific subject. This is important and becomes relevant to the study since it is during this time that children's literature is introduced and taught. The CAPS policy document outlines a clear directive on the time allocation per subject, aims, skills that need to be developed, key content areas as well as the weighting of content areas. The total time allocation for Reading and Phonics is 4 hours and 30 minutes to 5 hours per week (South Africa. Department of Basic Education, 2011:9) Shared Reading, Group Guided Reading, Paired and Independent Reading, and Phonics must be included in a focused lesson, daily (South Africa. Department of Basic Education, 2011:11).

As previously stated, it is during a Shared Reading, Group Guided Reading and Paired and Independent Reading experience that children's literature is introduced. Moreover, the document makes provision for Read Aloud time as an integral part of the balanced reading program (South Africa. Department of Basic Education, 2011:18). A balanced approach to literacy aims to combine two or more methods into the curriculum to learn language elements (Venketsamy & Sibanda, 2021:255). However, no specific time allocation is indicated in the policy document for Reading Aloud. The purpose of this session is solely to create love and passion for stories. According to Venketsamy and Sibanda (2021:263), reading for pleasure and meaning is one of the most significant skills that needs to be developed in Foundation Phase learners.

The CAPS document is well-defined and explicit about what needs to be accomplished during these sessions. Additionally, comprehensible guidelines are given on the formal and informal assessment that needs to be completed. Even though the CAPS document is very clear on what needs to be executed, ambiguous information is being provided on the specific books and their depiction that need to be brought forth in Grade 1 literature. The policy document does give a directive on the type of books that

need to be introduced but what remains uncertain is the genres of children's literature that must be introduced in Grade 1. The Home Language Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement for the Foundation Phase does not explicitly recommend fairy tales for Grade 1 but implicitly mentions Goldilocks and the Three Bears which can be used to guide children in identifying the initial problem, "*The porridge is too hot*" (South Africa. Department of Basic Education, 2011:75).

Another primary concern remains whether the literary works taught in Grade 1 address the neglected indigenous knowledge systems and whether this literature consists of African social constructs. Venketsamy and Sibanda (2021:263) recommend that appropriate literacy resources must be designed by material developers which resonate with the learners' lifeworld, context, and the situation they come from. Moreover, Makeleni and Sethusha (2014:108) suggest that curriculum developers need to consider the context in which the curriculum needs to be implemented before the initial implementation. Failure to include African social constructs can be detrimental to human development as these educational processes then dismally fail to create consciousness and self-knowledge (Buntu, 2013:6). Translating children's literature from languages with Eurocentric social constructs generates linguistic disadvantages, cultural biases, and a lack of social awareness.

Linked to policies about pedagogy, is the challenge of resources which influence curriculum implementation. Du Plessis and Mestry (2019:1) highlight challenges that hinder the policy implementation which include a lack of resources, lack of parental interest in children's education, insufficient funding from the state, underqualified teachers and multi-grade teaching. Makeleni and Sethusha (2014:108) signify additional challenges that could impede curriculum implementation which are overcrowded classes, inadequate resources, lack of teacher training, lack of curriculum implementation and poor infrastructure. Additionally, what remains undetermined is whether the resources that are indeed delivered, are culturally and socially inclusive. Several scholars have written about the challenges that hinder curriculum implementation (Matsepe & Maluleke, 2019:179) but diminutive research has been done to determine factors that influence teaching children's literature and moreover potential factors that can influence how they implement the CAPS curriculum and

ultimately teach literature. In this research study the aforesaid will be explored through the perspectives obtained from the Grade 1 teachers.

2.2.1 The hidden curriculum in children's literature

According to Alsubaie (2015:125), a hidden curriculum can be defined as unspoken words or implicit values, procedures, behaviours, and norms present in the educational setting. In the field of education, it is referred to as unintended messages that can be sent through various methods such as the behaviour of teachers, interaction, attitudes, approaches, values, and beliefs. Additionally, the quality of the school's atmosphere, values of the school and patterns provide students with non-written rules in the school environment such as routines, discipline and obedience to authority (Çubukçu, 2012:1529). Literature is one of the most influential media for constructing and conveying messages about the child's culture, cultural understandings, beliefs, settings and life experiences (Adam *et al.*, 2019:551). Therefore, literary works for children are a powerful tool that not only strengthens curriculum outcomes but also teaches values and core beliefs, and conveys messages (Bradbery, 2012:4). Following this line of thought, children's literature maintains a relevant role in the transmission of principles (Pires, 2011:251). Beckett *et al.* (2010:374) affirm that books are the most powerful medium to influence one's way of thinking and convey a message.

Thomas (2016:119) raises a critical viewpoint which states that troubling discourses of supremacy and colonialism are being transmitted through children's books found in classrooms. Evans *et al.* (2018:200) bring this into the South African schooling context and argue that it is often the Western middle class that dictates messages, deciding what is valued, privileged and shared. Short (2018:293) concurs and adds that these transmissions negatively affect children because they constantly see themselves and have to associate themselves with this context and develop perspectives on privilege and superiority that are based on false impressions by society. For this reason, Lebeloane (2017:4) defines the hidden curriculum as an indoctrination of the dominant culture, its values and beliefs, in this case referring to those of the colonizers. It is therefore paramount for teachers to have sufficient knowledge of the children's literature that they are teaching.

2.3 Understanding literary work for children

The term children's literature has been articulated by Hunt (2011) as twofold. Firstly, understanding that children's literature is an academic discipline and secondly, that it can be understood as a set of texts (Hunt, 2011:42). The variety of literature that is available for children is wide-ranging in topic, complex and diverse, and portrays a pictorial nature of narratives. Understanding the literary theory of children's literature is vital, especially when you teach it, particularly because it concerns the development of young children (Sattorova & Cammopoba, 2021:512). Thomas (2016:120) observes that a key function in teaching children's literature is to comprehend concepts around difference, diversity and power. Therefore, understanding the literary aspects which include the history, stereotyping, and culture, as well as the value of children's literature, as separate genres, are equally essential for this research study.

2.3.1 Defining children's literature

As a point of departure, the word 'children' must be defined to comprehend the target audience for the specific literary works that are scrutinized in this research study. The word 'children' in its literary sense, can be defined as all young literates as well as potential literates, from the moment they can leaf through a picture book or listen to a story transmitted in an audible format (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2021). It is important to note that there is a vast difference with evident boundaries between children's and adult literature (Stakić, 2014:243). According to Hunt (2002:15), literary works for children require specific skills and are written for a different target audience, with varied needs and ways of reading. Al Darwish (2014:78) agrees by stating that adult literature is indeed different from children's literature as children's literature needs to be written with a different skill set, for a different audience with different needs and reading methods. These literary works are particularly composed for the youngest population of readers, who have not yet matured to adulthood (Stakić, 2014:243). In virtue of this research study, children's literature will be scrutinized solely.

According to Sattorova and Cammopoba (2021:513), as suggested, children's literature is a much more complex topic because boundaries are indefinite. Hence, it is impossible to provide an exact definition of the genre. Hunt (2002:13) concurs and

states that the study of children's literature varies to an indefinite extent because of its complexity. For this reason, Nel and Paul (2011:1) argue that children's literature has become an umbrella term encompassing a range of disciplines, media and genres. Stakić (2014:250) alludes to the fact that children's literature is an integral part of literary art that is "created and shaped within the general laws of literary poetics". This body of written works can be considered suitable material for the literacy development of young learners due to inserted cultural information, its simple language style, and its comfortable length (Al Darwish, 2014:79). Typically accompanied by illustrations particularly aimed at entertaining or instructing young people, these literary works are easily recognizable by a specific appearance (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2021).

Seeing that the youngest population of readers are in primary school and the Foundation Phase, Monoyiou and Symeonidou (2016:2) assert that children's literature is an essential component of the school curriculum that is often used to promote certain values and concepts. Hunt (2002:13) describes this as an obvious point in children's literature where theory encounters real-life scenarios. The Foundation Phase includes Grade R, which is also known as the reception year, followed by Grades 1, 2 and 3 (South Africa. Department of Basic Education, 2011).

2.3.2 History of children's literature

Since the beginning of time, adults kept children amused with stories, whether these were stories that transmitted religion or just fables. Literature was primarily passed on orally in the form of fables, folk tales, and legends. This form of storytelling is commonly known as oral transmission (Kisak, 2016:66). During the 16th century, literary works for children were evangelical in tone and didactical, and mainly focused on rhymes, numbers, days of the week, manners, grammar, and religion (Sattorova & Cammopova, 2021:515; Thomas, 2016:118). However, in the 17th century, the publication of children's literature commenced on a large scale mainly to teach children about Christianity and theological concepts. Messages of salvation were conveyed through books other than the Bible. Nikolajeva (1995:32) attests that the first official children's books were published by various organizations of the church that mostly focused on principles of religion and moral values. The 18th century presented a turn-around for children's literature when reading books for pleasure was introduced,

followed by the mid-nineteenth century when children's literature was no longer seen as an inferior genre (Sattorova & Cammopova, 2021:516).

Children's literature is a relatively new, distinct genre that was considered a subordinate genre until the mid-nineteenth century. In modern times, literary works aimed at children encompass a wide range of works that consist of different genres and types.

2.3.3 Genres

A literary genre is a type of literary work that is frequently classified into subgenres. According to Kisak (2016:1), a specific genre is primarily determined by the content, literary technique, tone, and length. Therefore, a genre refers to a particular type of writing (Wessels, 2014:257). Children's literature can be classified as a unique genre consisting of folk tales, fairy tales, myths and legends, rhymes and poems, fantasy, school stories, lullabies, fables, songs, religious texts, comic books, graphic novels, plays, and biographies (Nel & Paul, 2011; Grendy & Reynolds, 2011; Kisak, 2016). Pires (2011:253) particularly categorizes tales, rhymes, nursery rhymes, and legends as traditional texts. In the context of this research study, Evans *et al.* (2018:135) suggest that the genres that need to be included in a Grade 1 classroom include realistic fiction, animal and human fantasy, folk tales, and simple non-fiction.

Much uncertainty still exists about the particular genres that need to be introduced in Grade 1 according to the prescribed curriculum. The Home Language Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement for the Foundation Phase only gives clear guidelines on genres in Grade 3, which is poetry (South Africa. Department of Basic Education, 2011:119). However, the document makes mention of Goldilocks and the Three Bears which can be used to guide children in identifying the initial problem, "*The porridge is too hot*", in Grade 1 (South Africa. Department of Basic Education, 2011:75). As a result, the genres relevant for this discussion are fairy tales and poetry as these are what have been identified in CAPS.

2.3.3.1 Fairy tales

A fairy tale is characteristically a short story that features folkloric characteristics such as mermaids, dwarves, fairies, witches, trolls, elves, and goblins, typically including enchantments or magic, with a fixed structure depicting events that could not possibly occur in real life (Kisak, 2016:71). Cultural fairy tales include children's storybooks like *Cinderella*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, *Rapunzel*, *The Little Mermaid*, *The Princess and the Pea*, *The Frog Prince*, and *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. In most of these stories, there is a supernatural element that affects the characters either directly or indirectly. In addition, an extensive number of fairy tales are based on traditional folklore of a specific culture and are the literary heritage of humans (Goldstein Library, Florida State University, 2011). Evans *et al.* (2018:114) observe that stereotyping in fairy tales is due to ideological assumptions about gender. Fairy tales are the fictional genre that has received the most feminist scholarly attention due to the increasing consciousness of the sexist ideology depicted in these stories. Hunt (2002:118) affirms and makes mention of a radical revival of fairy tales that will take place due to a rising interest in women's and children's literature studies.

2.3.3.2 Poems, rhymes and songs

Poetry or choral speaking can be defined as an art where the expressions of thoughts and feelings are verbalized through words (Wessels, 2014:286). Language usage is condensed, and imaginative thoughts typically have rhythmic expressions. This, according to Concannon-Gibney (2019:431), provides ample opportunities to develop literacy in a meaningful context. Wessels (2014:296-298) furthermore asserts that for children to develop linguistically and cognitively through poetry, it must contain certain characteristics. This includes rhythm, rhyme, alliteration, vowel assonance, onomatopoeia, imagery, personification, similes, and metaphors. Concannon-Gibney (2019:431) refers to rhyme, assonance, and alliteration as "poetry's rhythmic qualities". These qualities in children's poetry are essential because, according to Bester *et al.* (2013:234), they contribute significantly to the development of phonemic awareness, as well as the functions and patterns of speech and sound. These are pertinent contributory factors for developing emergent literacy. Wessels (2014:152) affirms that

during poetry or choral speaking, children learn to pronounce words correctly and become accustomed to the intonation and rhythm of the target language. According to the South African Department of Basic Education (2011:12) poetry falls within the time allocated for shared reading.

2.3.3.3 Types of children's literature

There is a common public perception that when speaking about children's literature, an individual habitually thinks of children's books. However, it is essential to acknowledge the classics of world literature, picture books, easy-to-read stories, and orally transmitted materials (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2021). Moreover, it is vital not to overlook the media that is making up children's literature in the digital and modern age. This includes e-books, animations, live-action films, computer games, and graphic novels (Grendy & Reynolds, 2011:36). Short (2018:287) refers to this literary trend as 'the digital future'. For this research study, the types of children's literature that will be explored are the variety reflected in the Home Language Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement for Foundation Phase Grade R – 3. Since the emphasis is placed on children's literature in Grade 1, the clarification of the different types of literature is done accordingly.

2.3.3.4 Big books, posters, or enlarged text

A big book is commonly used in the early year educational setting during a shared reading experience. It is a large storybook with large attractive illustrations. Illustrations are typically at the bottom and the print is at the top of the page (Wessels, 2014:81). This book or enlarged text is characteristically approximately 34 x 42 cm (Rofiah, Sheehy, Widayati & Budiyanto, 2021:4). Additional features include a limitation of words on one page as well as words that are not crowded together. Letters and words are well spaced to assist in facilitating reading by not obscuring the words with a pointer (Wessels, 2014:81). According to Rofiah *et al.* (2021:3), big books do have merit for supporting an inclusive pedagogy, which according to the *Education White Paper 6*, is also the fundamental underpinning of the South African education system (South Africa. Department of Basic Education: 2001). The entire shared reading experience therefore provides an opportunity to develop and promote a love for literacy (Bradbery,

2012:3). Additionally, enlarged text should not be limited to storybook text solely. Concannon-Gibney (2019:433) suggests large format anthologies and poetry on charts should also be included in this shared reading experience. In the digital age in which children are growing up, it is also advisable to project text on a smartboard (Concannon-Gibney, 2019:433) or by making use of a projector with a whiteboard.

2.3.3.5 Pictures and picture books

Pictures and picture books can be described as a form of visual artwork that offers valuable verbal encounters where children can make a connection to personal experiences, beliefs, and values (Mantei & Kervin, 2014:76). Pictures may also consist of a wide variety of visual artwork that includes pictures of different sizes cut out of books, magazines, newspapers, pamphlets, colouring books, congratulatory cards as well as the children's artwork (Bester *et al.*, 2013:77). Wessels (2014:136) raises a critical point about pictures and picture books which states that it is pivotal to consider the children's cognitive learning processes when applying visuals. Mantei & Kervin (2014:77) argue that visual materials allow the teacher an opportunity to develop a thorough comprehension of the child's learning process that can lead to informed pedagogical practices. Contrary to popular belief, Bradbery (2012:3) maintains that picture books do not only exist to improve literacy skills but the teacher should also provide an opportunity to explore themes and concepts in complex and contradictory issues.

2.3.3.6 Graded Reading Series

Wessels (2014:402) avers that graded readers are books written to enable children to read at a level that is appropriate for their language knowledge. These books are therefore written with grammar and vocabulary at different levels. The graded reading series in the Grade 1 classroom refers to a series of books or readers that are divided into levels one, two and three depending on the reading difficulty of the book. It ranges from the easiest to the more difficult book which is determined by the vocabulary as well as the length of text and sentences. Each of these levels consists of several readers. Children must first master reading several books at a particular level, fluently, before they are moved up to the next level (South Africa. Department of Basic

Education, 2011:132). This method of use is significant as the reading curriculum is adapted in such a way that it offers the child maximum success with a minimum of frustrations (Alsaadat, 2020:74). Furthermore, a genre study by Concannon-Gibney (2019) reveals that poetry can also be included in a guided reading session where children are provided the opportunity to read poetry at their instructional level (Concannon-Gibney, 2019:436).

2.3.3.7 Plays

Bester *et al.* (2013:85) state that plays are dramatizations with specific outcomes where children are allowed to act out or play different roles. This activity places the focus on the children, whereby children are divided into pairs or smaller groups to maximize learner talk time. Wessels (2014:167) therefore refers to plays as classroom drama with a particular focus on developing social skills and for children to become fluent speakers.

2.3.3.8 Fun books and/or Easy-to-read stories

Stakić (2014:243) argues that aesthetic enjoyment is one of the critical factors that need to be encompassed in children's literature. In their nature, children typically respond to humour and bright-coloured content. According to the Home Language Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement for the Foundation Phase, fun and easy-to-read books are shorter, simple books with predictable text and colourful illustrations. These books are also at a lower reading level than the books that are used for Shared reading and group-guided reading (South Africa, Department of Basic Education, 2011:14). Fun and easy-to-read books are therefore essential for the children to have a pleasurable literary engagement.

The types of children's literature mentioned in this section are as stated in the Home Language Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement for the Foundation Phase. Additional literary work that is required in the classroom for Grade 1 includes jokes, riddles, word puzzles, oral stories, logos, environmental print, and simple tables such as calendars or a birthday chart (South Africa, Department of Basic Education, 2011:11-75).

2.3.4 Illustrations in children's literature

Children respond to illustrations before they engage with text, hence visual depictions are part and parcel of children's literature. The function of the illustrations in children's literary works is to contribute to presenting the characters as participants in everyday activities (Monoyiou & Symeonidou, 2016:6). According to Short (2018:290), illustrations are an extension of text where visual images meet the verbal message, which is essential to telling the story. Moreover, Hunt (2002:124) refers to illustrations as an informational guide that contributes to shaping the interpretive possibilities of the text. In essence, the message that needs to be conveyed in literary works for children consists of two media: the text and the illustrations or visual depiction. Therefore, the success of the literary work then depends on how well the text and illustrations are integrated and ultimately conveyed to the target audience by the adult or the teacher.

Teachers are generally confronted with the mammoth task of developing strategies within their practices for learners to better recall information and reinforce comprehension of text. This challenge exists because children are immersed in a visual culture where images are central to their experiences and interactions (Short, 2018:289). As a means of addressing this predicament, illustrations added to text hold the aesthetic value that can capture and increase the interest of the target audience. Therefore, by making use of illustrations and text, teachers would succeed in their attempt to reinforce comprehension and better recall of information in their learners. This can be substantiated from two viewpoints. Firstly, due to the aesthetic value visual depiction holds, and secondly the cognitive benefits of illustrations for the specific target audience.

To elaborate on the aesthetic value, a research study by Keng Ong (2010) indicated that images have a role in facilitating reading to an extent where it affects the mood of the reader. Wessels (2014:138) concurs and adds that the emotions depicted by characters do not only awaken empathy but may also arouse the desire to read and comprehend. It then becomes evident that the aesthetics of the book affect the reader emotionally and can create a mood conducive to reading (Keng Ong, 2010:245). To create a favourable atmosphere, certain visual elements need to feature in illustrations. These artistic elements include line, colour, shapes, texture, composition, perspective,

space, and style. All elements considered, it is also imperative to note that various illustrative techniques are used in children's literature, namely, painterly techniques, graphic techniques as well as composite techniques. The technique utilized widely depends on the message that needs to be conveyed (Evans *et al.*, 2018;80-86).

Keng Ong (2010:251) further suggests that those illustrations do not only have aesthetic value but also hold immense cognitive benefits. Keng Ong (2010) states that it is apparent that illustrations accompanied by text are critical for the learners to grasp concepts and assist learners with memorization and comprehension. It can then be said that well-crafted illustrations in children's literature will depict the text accurately. Wessels (2014:269) affirms that good quality and interesting illustrations will not only keep learners interested but also help them to understand what the story is about. Cognitive benefits of illustrations in children's literature particularly include easily recalling information, improving comprehension, assistance with the retention of information, and stirring up curiosity that activates prior knowledge, which is essential for learning (Keng Ong, 2010:251).

Illustrations are essential in the text of children's literature, particularly for their aesthetic properties and to increase the interest and cognitive ability of the child. However, it is essential to note that the above-mentioned are not the only advantages of illustrations in children's literature. From a holistic point of view, illustrations also play a fundamental role in helping children discover their own identities by depicting cultural heritage (Adam *et al.*, 2019:559). The function of illustrations, the advantages, and the interpretive possibilities thereof can be argued from different viewpoints. Monoyiou and Symeonidou (2016:5) therefore suggest that future research on contemporary children's literature could incorporate utilizing illustrations as one of the axes of analysis and interpretation.

2.3.5 Language and style (linguistics and stylistics) in children's literature

The language and style of writing children's literature are fundamentally about the thoughts, expression, imagination, and creativity of the author. Even though in most instances, the author is an adult, there are specific features that must be included in the literary works of children, as a means of satisfying the audience. Essentially, the

language used in children's literature must be compliant with the age, moral and emotional maturity, as well as intellectual and emotional stability of the children (Stakić, 2014:244). Hunt (2002:33) concurs and adds that good children's literature commences with a thorough understanding of who the child is.

Hunt (2002:19) emphasizes the importance of understanding language as text, particularly because the primary audience is still learning about language as they use it. Therefore, literary works for children must be concise, clear and unencumbered, with completed episodes. Evans *et al.* (2018:135) suggest that language use should focus on the inclusion of multi-syllable words and less common spelling patterns, particularly in Grade 1. It must be dynamic in the sense that it draws attention, keeps the children interested, and ultimately, is characterized by grammatical integrity (Stakić, 2014:249). Moreover, Hunt (2002:34) believes that good children's literature is characterized by its simplicity and language usage that help the reader to experience the delight of beauty, wonder and humour, to ask questions, and challenge them to dream. Hunt (2002:67) concludes by stating that language use in children's literature is a critical factor as the criteria for the evaluation of quality children's literature does not only include entertainment value but also socio-political correctness.

Concerning style and grammar, Stakić (2014:250) argues from a diachronic perspective and states that children's literature is often characterized by irregularities in grammatical and syntactic form, neologisms, idioms, slang words, and non-poetic words. It is important to comprehend that this does not indicate a lack of clarity concerning the stylistics or linguistics of children's literature but rather a writing style that promotes a pleasurable experience with cheerful reactions and laughter (Stakić, 2014:250). To an extent, Hunt (2002:33,67) agrees as he refers to 'style' as the way the literary works are presented, which should consist of a good plot, a rich setting, well-developed characters and little explicit attention to language. This substantiates Stakić's (2014:250) perspective; a simplistic style of writing (saying more with fewer words) that does not represent superficiality, lack of aesthetic enjoyment or poverty, and is suitable, especially when the target audience is children. This is another facet that the study will explore through content analysis to determine whether the linguistic and stylistics of literature in Grade 1 are creating a pleasurable and positive experience

that benefit all children. This is important since it could be a factor that influences teaching of prescriptive literature in Grade 1.

2.3.6 Stereotyping in children's literature

Hilton and Von Hippel (1996:240) state that stereotypes are beliefs about the behaviours, characteristics, and attributes of members of certain groups. In addition to that, theories about why and how attributes go together. According to Monoyiou and Symeonidou (2016:2), research findings indicate that stereotyping is reproduced about people who have historically been oppressed by dominant groups. Stereotyping in the field of social science, particularly based on characteristics of the person such as gender, race or religion can therefore be defined as prejudiced views and preconceived ideas of a particular social group and have enormous potential for error (Hilton & Von Hippel, 1996:241). This standardized, unfair belief of particular characteristics of certain groups also presents itself in the literary works of children. According to Evans *et al.* (2018:204), the two most common stereotypes found in South African children's literature are gender and race. However, it is imperative to comprehend that these two forms of stereotyping are not isolated. Other forms of stereotyping in children's literature include issues of diversity which are disability, culture, religion, and sexuality.

An unequal power relation between females and males, where certain roles are being enforced, is a typical reflection of gender stereotyping. Through the works of children's literature, children learn to associate certain activities with particular roles and attribute specific behaviours to sexed bodies (Hateley, 2011:88). For example, in children's books, a woman is often associated with careers such as a nurse, teacher, or hairdresser, while men are associated with careers such as engineers, mechanics, or pharmacists. Children's literature, therefore, becomes a potential source of influencing young children about their roles in society and the classroom. It can then be argued that gender bias and stereotypes present in literary works for children, mould a sexist ideology for the young reader. Essentially, the kind of literature children are exposed to influences and shapes their thinking about general perceptions of social life (Monoyiou & Symeonidou, 2016:2; Beckett, Ellison, Barrett & Shah, 2010:373). This is important because children's books allow children to progressively develop modes of thinking and behaving concerning views constructed about boys or girls, disabled or

non-disabled people as well as minority groups and cultures (Monoyiou & Symeonidou, 2016:2). Stereotyping based on sexuality should however not be omitted.

Liang and Cohrssen (2020:43) stress the significance of teachers understanding that 'family' in the early childhood educational setting include gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex (LGBTIQ+) parents and their children. This is essential since picture books depicting LGBTIQ+ families now form a sub-genre within children's literature (Hedberg, Venzo & Young, 2022:1). As much as this is still a controversial topic in many countries, Jindra (2019:105) is of the view that these texts will provide children with a better cognition of the world and its differences. Short (2018:294) asserts that LGBTIQ+-themed books have the significance of raising issues such as sexual identity and gender diversity. *Morris Micklewhite and the Tangerine Dress* is a picture book example of a boy who faces great derision for being himself and forming his own identity. According to Hedberg *et al.* (2022:2), this sub-genre in children's literature is still in a developing stage but is pointing toward a new contemporary text that will be expanding in due course. Hedberg *et al.* (2022:4) also point out that stereotyping in children's literature based on sexuality does exist as gay representation in picture books seems to be sexualized and less parent-focused. Lesbian couples are often depicted as feminine or feminine and masculine but there is little evidence where both are masculine or depicted with short hair.

The absence of literature about the social groups discussed in this literature review, and others, conveys a message that they are 'less interesting or less valued members of society' (Beckett *et al.*, 2010:374). Monoyiou and Symeonidou (2016:3) affirm this viewpoint and particularly state that disabled characters are often depicted as 'poor little things' that have just experienced a tragedy. Monoyiou and Symeonidou (2016:2) also emphasize the underrepresentation of minority ethnic groups and mixed-race that are often portrayed in negative ways or as characters who are generally struggling to make a living. Racial stereotypes depicted in children's literature in South Africa are *the maid stereotype, the heathen stereotype, the exceptional black stereotype, the happy native, and the dependant black stereotype* (Evans *et al.*, 2018:205-206). This research study seeks to uncover and reveal hidden assumptions about racial stereotypes present in children's literature. This is essential as racial stereotypes could

be a determining factor that influences the teaching of prescriptive literature in Grade 1.

Since children's books widely inform the formation of identity, it is critical that these literary works also have a realistic representation of the culture that can be beneficial for the young child. This is important because children's literature must guide and assist the child to appreciate people with different individual characteristics and cultures (Monoyiou & Symeonidou, 2016:2). From this viewpoint, Crippen (2012) advises that we must be extremely cautious when teaching children about the cultural heritage of others and be particularly careful in selecting books to recommend to young children. She avers that "there are many stories, some folktales, which contain blatant stereotypes and inaccuracies about certain cultural groups" (Crippen, 2012).

2.3.7 Themes in children's literature

Evans *et al.* (2018:71) define a theme as the backbone of the story; an underlying message which contains certain essential truths that the author wants to bring to the attention of the reader. Hunt (2002:67) raises an essential viewpoint where he states that the context in which children's literature is disseminated focuses on the content of the literary works as well as the theme. Themes in children's literature are equally important as the literary work needs to intrigue and fascinate the child. Therefore, Stakić (2014:244) alludes that literature for children needs to portray highly thematic richness, that includes humour and bright-coloured content that aims to meet the inexhaustible fantasy of the child. Hunt (2002:34) concurs and further elaborates on suitable themes for literary works of children. According to Hunt, themes should be child-orientated with the child as protagonist, optimistic, simple, magical and may include fantasy. Stakić (2014:245) establishes viewpoints on themes from a humanitarian perspective and states that it should include "love, kindness, play, friendship, sympathy, human altruism, love for parents and animals, picturesque events as well as flora and fauna". In essence, dark themes of more serious events, which present projections of real life, are not as suitable but are however depicted in some forms of children's literature. Stakić (2014:246) therefore suggests that themes that contain diseases, poverty, wars, and social justice are not appropriate as children cannot yet distinguish a clear boundary between fiction and reality. Bradbery (2012:5)

vehemently disagrees with Stakić and argues that children's literature should assist children in understanding current and confronting issues while teachers are trying to contend with a crowded and rigid curriculum. Issues of social justice must be articulated through children's literature for the child to understand issues of racism, intolerance, refugees, prejudice, retribution, fair or unfair treatment, resilience, and hope. This is critical because children need to comprehend the significance of fair and equitable treatment for all (Bradbery, 2012:6). Themes in children's literature can be used to teach children about human rights and being socially just. In so doing, they would be able to humanize situations they are experiencing and seeing in the mainstream media daily. Books that have been published with social justice themes are *The Island* by Armin Greder and *The Little Refugee* by Ahn Do.

2.3.8 Children's literature and culture

Pires (2011:253) emphasizes that children's literature is a fundamental component of pedagogical activities that needs to include how African people and descendants were treated. This should be accomplished in a quest to develop diversity and build the children's identities (Pires, 2011:253). Adam *et al.*, (2019:551) agree with Pires that children's literature is a powerful text that ought to assist children in understanding their identity, community, and families. Additionally, it should broaden their understanding of the world and entail encounters that they can relate to (Adam *et al.*, 2019:551). Crippen (2012) attests and states that children's literature provides an avenue for children to learn about their cultural heritage and the cultures of other people. It then becomes evident that through children's literature, children meet cultures that are similar and different to their own. As a result, these literary works will contribute to cultural identity and ultimately multicultural awareness (Bradbery, 2012:4). Crippen (2012) further emphasizes the essentiality of children learning these values because developing positive attitudes toward our own culture and the cultures of others, is a necessity for growth, personal as well as social development. Short (2018:293), however, raises a critical viewpoint and makes mention of a 'continuing problematic trend' which is the lack of cultural diversity in children's books and the underrepresentation thereof. This deficiency in material resources can result in devastating repercussions for children as readers who cannot connect with their own identities (Short, 2018:294).

2.3.9 The value of children's literature

The advantages that literary works for children hold are multifaceted in such a way that they can promote emergent literacy skills, language, and vocabulary development, provide aesthetic enjoyment, develop social and intellectual skills and additionally provide ample opportunities for cultural transfer.

As a point of departure, I want to discuss the important advantages children's literature holds for the cognitive development of the young child. Cognitive development refers to the development of thought. This alludes to a set of mental abilities that will allow the child 'to know' or 'to come to know' (Excell & Linington, 2015:26). As stated in the cognitive learning theory of Jean Piaget (1936), children in the early childhood years learn through senses, concretely, actively through exploration and experimentation. According to Evans *et al.* (2018:62), literary works for children provide the opportunity to learn through exploration and experiencing books through senses: smell, taste, sight, touch and sound. Research has found that teaching and reading literature to children, especially in the early years, is one of the most important activities for developing the knowledge required for eventual success in academics (Kalb & van Ours, 2021:2). This concludes a key learning experience in the classroom context as it supports cognitive stimulation which is also essential for emergent literacy development. Keng Ong (2010:251) concurs and mentions additional cognitive advantages such as improved comprehension and concentration, easily recalling information, stirring curiosity and creativity, and ultimately, assistance with retention of information.

Books and stories can be instrumental in developing compassion, creativity and imagination (Bradbery, 2012:4). Al Darwish (2014:82) agrees that engagement with children's literature provides a high-quality listening experience that raises imagination and creates a desire for creativity. The latter will be addressed first and subsequently the advantages of the listening experience. Problem-solving is another facet of creativity (Evans *et al.*, 2018:66). In storybooks, characters often encounter problems or challenges that need solutions. E.g., in the fairy tale of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* where they have to share one small house that becomes a little crowded.

Literature has the potential to broaden the child's understanding of the pluralistic nature of society as well as the challenges that might prevail (Adam *et al.*, 2019:552). These encounters influence and broaden critical thinking skills, which are essential for cognitive development.

The listening experience is essential as critical skills are developed that support language development. Al Darwish (2014:81) signifies the range of linguistic inputs that children's literature provides which is unavailable to the non-literary child. Besides the fact that these literary works encourage creativity and imagination, the language usage often includes antonyms, augmentative, diminutives, onomatopoeic and euphoric words. In many instances, this is the only dictionary that can expand the child's vocabulary next to his cognitive experience (Stakić, 2014:250). Evans *et al.* (2018:64) emphasize the essentiality of exposing children to new sounds, words, rhymes and rhythmical patterns. However, it is important to utilize a range of linguistic inputs in different contexts so that the child can understand how and when to use the new words acquired.

Literary works for the youngest population of readers can assist and guide them in understanding themselves, their experiences, diversity, as well as cross-cultural understanding which are essential components in preparing them for adulthood (Adam *et al.*, 2019:551). Furthermore, it will assist them in shaping a positive identity and understanding and appreciating diversity (Monoyiou & Symeonidou, 2016:14). This is the reason why realistic depictions of diversity are imperative, as it will assist children in becoming acquainted with concepts of diversity such as disability, gender, race, language, and culture. Essentially, it will help children to understand the commonalities and differences between their peers and themselves, as well as how to consider their emotions (Monoyiou & Symeonidou, 2016:2). Children's literature thus holds the potential to guide children in not only understanding and accepting their diverse nature but also provides the opportunity to model acceptance and respect to others.

According to Stakić (2014:250), children's literature aimed at the readers has the potential to develop and nurture a love for the world of fine arts. It has the potential to develop an aesthetic sensibility that will tend to favour beauty (Stakić, 2014:250). This is important because children will develop a spiritual need for literature and will become

life-long readers (Al Darwish, 2014:82). Children's literature, therefore, enhances the holistic development of young literates – cognitively, linguistically, culturally, socially, emotionally, morally, physically and creatively (Evans *et al.*, 2018:130; Bradbery, 2012:4). In essence, this literary work is a contributing factor to the development of becoming a responsible member of society (Crippen, 2012).

However, Bradbery (2012:5) argues from a broader scope which is to understand the value and concepts of children's literature from a global perspective. As previously mentioned, children's literature should expose children to moral dilemmas so that they can evaluate and understand the concepts of citizenship. This is beneficial to young children as they will begin to understand issues regarding a sustainable future and develop a sense of shared fate for the globe. In doing so, children would be enabled to scrutinize complex issues such as poverty and social justice through the use of fictional characters depicted in children's literary works (Bradbery, 2012:6).

2.3.10 Children's literature in the classroom

From the earliest formal school year, children are exposed to children's literature, mainly books, which are prescribed by office-based staff members of an education district. In the South African basic education system for the Foundation Phase, the books referred to are called the graded reading series. These lists are considered essential materials to teach children's literature and also achieve academic success. Al Darwish (2014:78) highly criticizes this method and calls it 'selected and teacher-controlled readings'. Venketsamy and Sibanda (2021:263) state that teachers are being restricted by using text and resources provided by the department. In addition, Al Darwish (2014:78) suggests that this system allows children little choice in their reading and is designed in such a way that young people never pick up a book voluntarily once they have graduated (Al Darwish, 2014:78).

A semi-structured interview and a focus group with teachers will serve as a platform to gain the teacher's perspective on whether it is sufficient to simply select books with different characters and races or different levels of grammar and language for the contemporary South African classroom. This is essential because how characters are positioned in relation to one another is the actual critical element. Evans *et al.*,

(2018:13) particularly elaborate on this assertion and state that the majority of authors of South African children's books are white, therefore unconscious biases are frequently revealed. This means that white characters are often portrayed as the protagonists, while black characters have negative or secondary portrayals. Examples of secondary portrayals are characters of colour depicted as the helpers or victims of poverty or sexual abuse. Negative portrayals include “hidden” dehumanization of people of colour, for example, that darker characters evoke fears of violence (Smith, 2011:190). The depiction of characters in this manner becomes problematic in the classroom context because it is a crucial social construct that not only authors of children's literature but also teachers need to consider when choosing books for Grade 1 learners.

Al Darwish (2014:79) further argues that three important criteria need to be adhered to when choosing children's literature for this classroom context. These include content, length, and language use. Firstly, the content must include cultural information that the child can relate to their own experiences, interests, and backgrounds. This is essential for the children to gain insight into their lives and additionally their relationship with others (Al Darwish, 2014:81). Secondly, the length must be comfortable and age-appropriate and thirdly the language must be simple and on the developmental level of the child (Al Darwish, 2014:79). Evans *et al.* (2018:135) therefore advise that books for the Grade 1 classroom should be between 10 – 20 pages in length, including illustrations with text that are more reflective of written than spoken words.

The learning environment should offer ample opportunities for the children to not only acquire knowledge and language through children's literature but also how to use it and associate it with the text. According to Al Darwish (2014:82), the teacher holds a significant role in teaching children's literature and arranging the classroom climate into a text-rich environment. Alsaadat (2020:74) concurs and emphasizes the fact that teachers must provide an atmosphere within the classroom context that is conducive to learning and additionally where children feel comfortable learning. It is, therefore, the primary task of the teacher to develop children who appreciate quality literature through pleasurable experiences and become lifetime readers (Al Darwish, 2014:82). The outcome of this experience extensively depends on the way the teacher is teaching children's literature and equally how she treats the children during the

engagement (Alsaadat, 2020:74). Essentially, the learning environment must be structured in such a way that it utilizes inclusive literature that represents diversity and affirms identity (Adam *et al.*, 2019:551). This includes diversity in the form of race, language, culture, disability, and appearance. Whichever guidelines are provided by the department, it is still paramount to comprehend that the teacher's approach to the literature and her/his representation of the subject, theme, motifs, and main characters of the book are essential for the development of the child.

2.4 Teacher's knowledge of children's literature

The Foundation Phase educational setting should be a literate environment that provides a wide range of text and literary experiences. For this objective to materialize, subject knowledge of children's literature and additional text for the younger population of readers is not an optional extra (Cremin, 2019:2). On this basis, Sharp, Diego-Medrano and Coneway (2018:1) argue that Foundation Phase teachers must develop knowledge and understanding related to children's literature. According to Al Darwish (2014:82), teacher knowledge of children's literature is essential for the development of young literates who should derive pleasure and meaning from their literary experiences. He argues that teachers must be knowledgeable regarding children's literature to be active participants in literacy development. Cremin, Mottram, Bearne and Goodwin (2008:449) as well as Cremin (2019:2) concur and state that teacher's knowledge of children's literature is a prerequisite if teachers want to develop and sustain young readers with positive attitudes towards the reading experience.

According to Sharp *et al.* (2018:1), Foundation Phase teachers ought to be highly skilled practitioners who should be able to select and evaluate children's literature that can support teaching and learning across the curriculum. These teachers must be experts who determine the literary content and can select and manage the required materials for the literacy lesson (Botirova, 2022:75,76). This is critical to prevent an over-dependence on a canon of well-established children's authors. However, İnce Samur's (2021) study found that teachers do not comprehend the concept of children's literature and they could also not define it. Additionally, teachers lack knowledge about titles and authors of children's books which can have a detrimental effect on the literacy development of the child (İnce Samur, 2021:416).

Introducing children's literature requires active initiatives which include reading aloud, book discussions and establishing and coordinating literature groups (Al Darwish, 2014:82). However, to implement the latter successfully, and to the full benefit of the child, the teacher must also have a rich historic knowledge of the literary works that will be introduced in these sessions. A broader perspective has been adopted by Evans *et al.* (2018:234) who argue that teachers must not only keep themselves updated with current affairs and contentious issues regarding children's literature but are obligated to know the history of children's literature and literacy practices. This is imperative because teachers must be proficient in analysing text to identify cultural, political, historical, and educational influences. By doing so, themes in the text as well as between texts can be scrutinised. An action research study by Ince Samur (2021) revealed that teachers do not have sufficient expertise to execute the book selection process successfully. In addition, they could also not identify qualities and artistic value that books should have according to the child's developmental level (Ince Samur, 2021:416).

Much of the available literature deals with strategies on how children's literature can be used to teach reading but evidence on training Foundation Phase teachers how to select, analyse and evaluate text for young readers has not been acquired. Correspondingly, a diversified lens for text selection and a sufficient understanding of the elements of children's literature are vital for evaluating the text (Thomas, 2016:120). Hence, a sufficient understanding of children's literature can categorically develop social critical consciousness (Sharp *et al.*, 2018:3) and subsequently assist teachers in making knowledgeable selections of children's literary works. Moreover, Cremin (2019:2) asserts that if teachers do not have a wide range of knowledge of children's literature, they are not well positioned to select, analyse and evaluate text nor would they be able to develop and nurture reading skills.

Cremin *et al.* (2008:449) argue that the professional knowledge and understanding of the teacher that relates to children's literature will influence their use of children's literature in their classroom. A study by Botirova (2022:65) indicates that literature education should be an integral part of the education system when training literature teachers of the future. Sharp *et al.* (2018:1) concur and suggest that professional

knowledge and comprehension of children's literature ought to be a vital component in the preparation of Foundation Phase teachers that should be addressed in coursework during tertiary education. Sharp *et al.* (2018:2) therefore recommend that coursework in the field of teacher education should require the successful completion of children's literature during the preparation program. Botirova's study (2022:66) makes three suggestions to institutions of higher learning that are relevant to this study on how to prepare the future literacy teacher:

1. Development of a professional profile of a teacher of future literature, continuous improvement, and its introduction into the education system.
2. Advanced training of future teachers of literature in the use of modern information and communication technologies.
3. To help future teachers of literature develop skills of professional adaptation to real-life situations and conditions.

What remains uncertain is to which extent Foundation Phase teachers' literacy journey and experiences influence the way that they teach or interpret the curriculum. Moreover, whether they rely on the Western way of teaching or delve into knowledge that does not necessarily exist in the curriculum.

It is also essential to place the attitudes, desires, interests, and dispositions of the teacher under scrutiny as these factors are vitally connected to professional knowledge. Ultimately, these factors will determine how teachers will introduce children's literature in their classroom practices (Cremin *et al.*, 2008:449). Adam *et al.* (2019:554) stress the importance of investigating the attitudes of teachers as mediators towards children's literature, as this is considered a contributing factor towards the knowledge that the teacher will ultimately acquire. Teacher disposition should however not be omitted in discussions of developing professional knowledge. This refers to the nurturing qualities the teacher should develop to improve the literacy skills and competencies of the learners. The literary growth of the children is primarily dependent on the Foundation Phase teacher who introduces children's literature, he/she must have an inclusive, diverse, passionate and caring disposition (Evans *et al.*, 2018:236).

Another key aspect is the teacher's knowledge of different genres in children's literature. According to Akins *et al.* (2018:60), teachers' competency in children's literature is not only dependent on the knowledge of quality authors and their text but also their ability to discuss and recommend different genres. Cremin (2019:3) asserts that it is essential for teachers to expand their repertoire of children's literature to tailor their recommendations to the individual needs and interests of the children. Research by Akins *et al.* (2018:63) identifies a gap in literature regarding teachers' knowledge of book titles as well as genres. A genre study by Concannon-Gibney (2019) reveals teachers' lack of ability to teach the poetry genre effectively and regards this as an untapped potential that should be unlocked (Concannon-Gibney, 2019:431). Notably, the poetry genre is explicitly stated in the CAPS Foundation Phase Home Language document. The imperativeness of the teacher knowing book titles in various genres therefore cannot be underestimated (Akins *et al.*, 2018:66). This is significant because the characteristics of each genre will assist the teacher in catering for distinctive learner needs.

Nonetheless, the ability to make appropriate literary recommendations on the developmental level of the child and create complex instructional connections, requires teachers to read several genres at different reading levels (Akins *et al.*, 2018:66). Concannon-Gibney (2019:431) concurs and states that teachers must read a genre to teach the genre. Inadequate knowledge about children's literature indicates that the teacher can fail to guide the young reader (İnce Samur, 2021:430).

2.5 The literacy journey of the teacher

Handa (2004:117) notes that reflections are important to enhance comprehension of academic issues. By investigating the literacy journey of the teacher, the aim would be to provide a platform for the teachers to reflect on the experiences that formed them as literate individuals. According to Edwards (2009:52), teachers need to reflect upon their personal history to apply new theoretical knowledge. Additionally, to gain an understanding of those whom they teach, they first need to reflect and understand their history and how it was shaped by time and place. Handa (2004:117) suggests that teachers must critically reflect on their own experiences, especially those that they

found challenging. A study by Christ and Sharma (2018:57) asserts that reflections with a focus on professional development can assist teachers in selecting culturally relevant text and in addition develop socio-cultural consciousness. Therefore, it is equally important to reflect and understand how the teachers' experiences were shaped within a political, social and economic context. In this research study, the literacy journey of teachers will be investigated to determine whether their historical literary experiences influence how they teach literature in Grade 1.

2.6 Theoretical framework

Western epistemologies and a Eurocentric approach to teaching enjoy *carte blanche* in the South African schooling system while viable Indigenous epistemologies, which can address inequalities, are ignored (Mahabeer, 2020:5). Clercq (2020:8) observes that these educational inequalities are produced by poor socio-economic circumstances and poverty. Educational inequality includes a socially biased curriculum, an unequal distribution of resources, uneven quality of principles, overcrowded classrooms and schools, and a lack of qualified teachers and resources. These aspects of educational inequality can lead to low educational outcomes for the majority of poor learners (Clercq, 2020:6). Social Justice is an important concept that can reconstruct, redistribute and deconstruct distorted information so that there is a balance of information to the benefit of learners (Lebeloane, 2017:5). This study aims to use Social Justice as a theory to interrogate the Eurocentric epistemology by investigating the teachers own personal literacy journeys, how they interpret the curriculum and ultimately to determine the factors that influence teaching prescriptive literature in Grade 1.

2.6.1 The concept of Social Justice

Social Justice is a multifaceted concept that attempts to provide a framework for the recognition of diversity and human rights. It is a humanizing process that should be perceived and comprehended as a reaction to diversifying humanity in terms of rights, ability, socio-economic circumstances, and choice (Hlalele, 2012:111). According to Woods (2018:2), the term Social Justice refers to efforts that encourage, and ultimately achieve equality. These efforts comprise attempts to provide access to quality services

to all. Hlalele (2012:111) asserts that these efforts should circumvent exclusionary practices and ostracism that have permeated South Africa for an extensive period.

Griffiths (1998:175) avers that Social Justice as a multi-dimensional concept is grounded in considerations of welfare, housing, and health. Moreover, Social Justice theories that are rooted in liberalism, are not usefully applicable to issues of education. Contrariwise, Woods particularly emphasizes health services and education and postulates that these services should be accessible to all citizens irrespective of race, religion, gender, culture, social standing, class, and language or social practices (Woods, 2018:2). Sexual equality and disability should however not be omitted. For this reason, Lebeloane (2017:3) asserts that Social Justice should be defined as a state of affairs whereby societal members of different classes, races, ages, disabilities, incomes, genders, languages, or religions share all services and goods equally.

In a quest to eradicate oppression, marginalization, and exclusionary practices based on the stated characteristics, the concept of Social Justice demands opportunities and equal rights for all persons; from the poorest margin of society to the wealthiest (Hlalele, 2012:112). This line of thought coincides with *A Theory of Justice* (1971) by John Rawls where the central idea of justice signifies equalizing factors beyond people's control and that inequalities should only emerge as a result of the choices made by the people (Stone, 2022:159).

Griffiths (1998:185) summarizes Social Justice by stating that it is a liberal framework that encapsulates rights-based morality, individual freedom as well as universal ideals. Consensus has been reached by most scholars and theorists that Social Justice is an important concept to establish an equal society. However, there have been several disagreements on the requirements and principles of Social Justice (Boot, 2012:9). The term Social Justice has mainly been established as a multi-faceted concept and therefore straightforward definitions and solutions to injustice and inequalities are not plausible (Woods, 2018:3). In essence, Social Justice seeks to institutionalize a culture of non-oppressiveness. Woods, therefore, suggests that recalibrating privilege and social transformation will be mandatory to achieve living in an equal and just society. Subsequently, actions to eradicate oppression must materialize through consultative,

participative, and collective processes (Hlalele, 2012:113). In light of this clarification, the theory that underpins this study is *A Theory of Justice* by John Rawls (1971).

2.6.2 Social Justice and its relation to education

Before I commence with the discussion of *A Theory of Justice*, which serves as the theoretical framework for this research study, I want to briefly address Social Justice and its relation to education. Griffiths (1998:186) advises that it is essential to commence from the context of education, rather than developing and discussing a theory in isolation. As previously mentioned, schools are confronted with a plethora of challenges which include maldistribution and misrecognition. According to Woods (2018:3), these two factors are the foundation of injustice and inequalities. Injustice occurs when societal members do not receive equitable treatment concerning rights, opportunities, and resources because they possess characteristics that are opposed to those of the dominant societal members (Frey & Blinne, 2017:4). High levels of exclusion, underachievement of certain groups, parental choice, and the standard of literacy are huge Social Justice concerns within the educational setting. In addition to the latter, the distribution of resources, status, and power also play a role (Griffiths, 1998:180).

Hölscher (2014:23) avers that the challenges to Social Justice are constituted by social positions, socio-economic inequalities, economic inequities as well as power relations, which privilege some groups while marginalizing, disadvantaging, and excluding other groups. Woods (2018:2) believes that Social Justice takes particular regard of equity, rather than equality, meaning all persons should be provided with what they need to participate and benefit equally in society. Therefore, Griffiths (1998:187) alludes that Social Justice in education is mainly concerned with the distribution of resources. By taking a socially just approach, in a quest to create a more equitable playground, social institutions such as education require the distribution of resources as well as recognition of diversity (Woods, 2018:3).

Social Justice concerns in education are matters of urgency. Teachers are compelled to cope with very turbulent times and will benefit from theories that could address their urgent needs (Griffiths, 1998:186). Flessner and Payne (2017:2) bring the latter into a

classroom context and state that the work and efforts of the teacher must entail elements of Social Justice and equity, that should be ingrained in not only the school or classroom but specifically the curriculum. Woods (2018:3) postulates that all children, even those coming from the highest poverty-stricken communities, must have access to basic skills of literacy and must be provided with the opportunity to be recognized members of society, in the school curriculum and the classroom. To bring this into the context of children's literature and this research study, it is critical to firstly scrutinize whether literary resources, to create an equitable playground, are available in quintile 1 schools. Furthermore, how the children and their communities are positioned in the text, whether the children engaging in the literary content can recognize themselves in the texts and images, and ultimately whether the policies, curriculum, and resources are representative of the marginalized. Failure to address factors that could influence how Grade 1 teachers introduce children's literature, can be detrimental to human development and hinder educational progression. For this reason, Flessner & Payne (2017:4) assert that it is critical to attend to unequal social systems in which schools are set.

2.6.3 Western epistemology in the African educational setting

The objective of this research study is to understand teachers' perspectives on teaching prescribed literature in Grade 1 and additionally, factors that influence teaching the literature. Within this post-colonial context, it is critical to investigate the knowledge children gain in the classroom and its relation to messages conveyed in children's literature. This is important because while the schools have the full potential to be "laboratories for social justice in a just society" (Lebeloane, 2017:1), they continue to perpetuate Western, Eurocentric ways of knowing whilst ignoring the Indigenous knowledge systems of the learners (Mahabeer, 2020:4). Given the latter, it then becomes essential for this research study to determine what and how Western epistemology impacts teachers' perspectives, particularly concerning factors that influence how they teach children's literature.

Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout (2014:23) define the term 'epistemology' as the study of knowledge, the nature thereof, and different ways of knowing. According to Abdi (2006:16), it is also the examination of theories and knowledge produced. The

term 'Western' refers to the European civilization that constituted a new and modern world system, whose architecture was constructed in such a way that subjugated the other parts of the world (Ndlovu, 2014:86). The Eurocentric canon attributes truth only to the Western way of knowledge production, mainly under the assumption that Western European philosophies, values, culture and heritage are qualitatively superior to all non-Western philosophical ideology, philosophy, values and culture (Gwaravanda & Ndofirepi, 2021:5).

Buntu (2013:7) stresses the concern that Western education transmits a culture in stark opposition to what would have been transmitted from an African worldview. Moreover, the canon disregards other epistemic traditions and cultures and is used as a standard through which humanity is measured (Gwaravanda & Ndofirepi, 2021:5). According to Abdi (2006:20), the arrival of this new world system on the African continent established the supremacy of the European worldview. Lebeloane, (2017:2) concurs and states that everything was built on white supremacy. Furthermore, the colonized lost their ability and expertise to create and interpret knowledge. This implies that the colonized have lost their epistemology and adopted those of the colonizers.

Ndlovu (2014:86) asserts that this reconstruction was accompanied by colonial education and Western epistemic domination. Besides the elevation of English above other African languages, Lebeloane (2017:2) raises another critical viewpoint which states that it has become a norm to measure the educational achievement of African children based on a Western, European capitalist culture. According to Abdi (2008:309), the transmission of Western culture has resulted in Eurocentric hegemony, which has been prolonged in post-colonial South Africa, where African worldviews and ways of knowing have been marginalized for an extensive period. A research study by Mahabeer (2020) revealed that teachers are aware of the influences of coloniality on the education system and have concluded that inequalities that emerged as a result of Apartheid, should be addressed to restore dignity and respect, through recovering indigenous knowledge systems (Mahabeer, 2020:20).

Heleta (2018:51) alludes that the transmission of Eurocentric ideologies and worldviews, which are designed to inculcate inferiority to African knowledge systems, are parcelled and presented in the form of textbooks, curriculums, and educational

resources. Buntu (2013:7) agrees that there is a disregard for African epistemology in the educational setting and asserts that facilitating this transmission indisputably includes children's literature such as fables, myths, legends, and proverbs. Hunt (2002:42) observes that literary works of children are often Eurocentric in nature and raises the point of what he calls 'forgotten text'. The 'forgotten text' refers to the exclusion of the history of blacks, women, and minority groups in society within children's literature (Hunt, 2002:42). However, Hunt (2002:42) asserts that great strides have been made to recover history as these changes will benefit the academic study of children's literature.

Ndlovu (2014:85) suggests that indigenous knowledge needs to be rescued from Eurocentric views to respond to African-based challenges that include respect for unique African humanness. Fataar (2018:vii) concurs and therefore proposes that indigenous knowledge systems and paradigms must be incorporated into the South African education system as a matter of urgency.

Concerning teaching children's literature, it is paramount to comprehend that Africanising the curriculum does not entail adding short stories by African writers or translating stories with European conventions into African languages (Livingston, 2018:2). Moreover, translating children's literature from languages with Eurocentric social constructs indisputably generates linguistic disadvantages, cultural biases, and a lack of social awareness. Livingston (2018:9) affirms this by stating that changing the names of characters does not change a Eurocentric story into an African one.

2.6.4 John Rawls' theory of Social Justice

John Rawls's (1971) *A Theory of Justice*, is regarded as one of the most important and influential conceptions of justice (Edor, 2020:179). Kam (2014:724) articulates Rawls' idea of Social Justice and states that it is concerned with the fair or just distribution of social primary goods. Rawls defines social primary goods as opportunity and liberty, wealth and income as well as the basis of self-respect. These social primary goods should be equally distributed amongst all unless an unequal distribution is to the advantage of the least favoured (Rawls, 1971:303). Hunt (2013:49) asserts that a just society, according to the Rawlsian concept of justice, accommodates all reasonable

ideas of a good life. South Africa is a country where inequalities are pervasive and deeply entrenched in society. Stone (2022:158) therefore suggests that returning to Rawls' theory on justice can assist and guide debates on Social Justice in productive directions.

Rawls introduces his theory of Social Justice by articulating that justice concerns itself with the function of the structures of society, "*the way in which the major social institutions distribute fundamental rights and duties and determine the division of advantages from social cooperation*" (Rawls, 1971:7). Rawls defines social institutions as follows: "*...by major institutions, I understand the political constitution and the principle economic and social arrangements. Thus, the legal protection of freedom of thought and liberty of conscience, competitive markets, private property in the means of production, and the monogamous family are examples of major institutions*" (Rawls, 1971:7).

Rawls's theory is primarily focused on assessing the distributive function of the assets of society, as well as basic rights and duties, from what he terms, the "original position". In the original position, participants in social cooperation, free and rational persons, decide the terms and conditions of Social Justice. According to Edor (2020:185), the principal idea of the original position is to formulate the conditions under which justice as fairness can evolve. Ultimately, the goal is to stipulate the most suitable principle for realizing liberty and equality when society is seen as a system of cooperation between equal and free people. Therefore, the notion behind the original position is mainly to establish a fair procedure so that any principles agreed to are just and fair (Rawls, 1971:136). Rawls, therefore, argues that "*Men are to decide in advance how they are to regulate their claim against one another and what is to be the foundation charter of their society*" (Rawls, 1971:11).

In addition, Rawls believes that the way to determine which principles of justice are fair is to consider which principles would be chosen by the people. This means that the parties, who are not necessarily informed on how they are going to be affected by them, decide on the choice of principles as members of society (Hunt, 2013:53). Rawls imagines people choosing principles in an original position, behind a "veil of ignorance". He clarifies the assertion on the veil of ignorance by stating: "*If a man knew*

that he was wealthy, he might find it rational to advance the principle that various taxes for welfare measures be counted unjust; if he knew he was poor, he would most likely propose the contrary principle" (Rawls, 1971:19). This statement implies that when parties choose principles behind the veil of ignorance, they lack knowledge of those facts about their situations, which would position them unequally (Rawls, 1971:137). In essence, the parties will be unaware of their class, social status, particular generation, and natural abilities (Bankovsky, 2011:99).

People in the original position are free, equal, and rational. However, this does not automatically imply that they are equal in social status, class, intelligence, strength, position, and capacities, as the latter is conferred by the contingency of social circumstances (Edor, 2020:186). Therefore, Rawls argues that the veil of ignorance is a restriction against the prejudice that could influence men when they decide what is fair and just. However, Rawls believes that when the principles of justice are chosen behind a veil of ignorance, no one is disadvantaged, or advantaged, by the outcome of natural chance, in the choice of principles or the contingency of social circumstances. Therefore, no one can favour their particular condition, and the principles of justice are the result of a fair agreement, or bargain (Rawls, 1971:137). The aforementioned clarifies the propriety of the title "justice as fairness" which seeks to convey the idea that principles of justice are agreed to in an initial situation that is fair (Rawls, 1971:12). Edor (2020:184) advises that comprehension of Rawls's conception of 'fairness' is a prerequisite to understanding the principles and the theory of Justice.

2.6.4.1 Principles of Social Justice

A comparative justice essay by Boot (2012) reveals that a theory of Justice would aim to identify or determine principles of justice, their scope as well as the ordering (Boot, 2012:20). Rawls's theory of Justice as fairness suggests that Social Justice should be based on two principles (Hunt, 2013). Notably, these two principles solely apply to the basic structure of society and are primarily put in place to govern the assignment of rights and duties, moreover, to regulate the distribution of social and economic advantages (Rawls, 1971:61). Therefore, the concept of Social Justice by Rawls is defined by the role of its principles in assigning these rights and duties and defining

the proper division of social advantages (Rawls, 1971:10). Rawls formulated the concept of Social Justice in the form of two principles: The principle of liberty and the principle of social and economic inequalities. These principles focus on dealing with inequality by addressing institutions that regulate access to resources. The principles propose that the distribution of resources should benefit the least advantaged while ensuring that all are exercising their basic rights and are provided with equal and fair opportunities. Moreover, the principles address the recognition of marginalised groups in society. This is important for the research study as it provided a lens through which I viewed my data.

The principle of liberty

“Each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive total system of equal basic liberties compatible with a similar system of liberty for all” (Rawls, 1971:302).

The first principle alludes that every person has the same basic rights as others. This means that everyone holds an equal set of rights which is consistent with everyone else's corresponding set of rights (Follesdal, 2015:3). In essence, every person in society has equal rights to the same liberties as everyone else and should be entitled to them (Kam, 2014:724). Equal liberties include civil and political liberties like the right to vote and being eligible to hold public office, freedom of speech, thought and assembly, and the right to being equally protected under law, or as Rawls articulates *“freedom from arbitrary arrest and seizure...”* (Rawls, 1971:61).

Rawls's theory is mainly defined by the principles of justice; therefore, this principle will be applied to investigate whether the current curriculum as well as the CAPS Home Language document for the Foundation Phase are providing all Grade 1 learners the opportunity to exercise basic rights and liberties, particularly in the model of a quintile 1 school.

The principle of social and economic inequalities

According to Rawls, the second principle must be arranged so that it is:

- a) *“to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged, consistent with the just savings principle...”* (Rawls, 1971:302).

- b) *“attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity (Rawls, 1971:302).*

The second principle, therefore, consists of two conditions titled:

- a) The principle of equal opportunity

This principle suggests that economic and social disparities that might exist must be linked to a social position; jobs and careers (Follesdal, 2015:4). These positions must be equally accessible to all who are able and willing to use their abilities. Essentially, this principle justifies that inequality must be connected to opportunities that are still open to everyone.

By applying the principle of equal opportunity, I was able to determine the knowledge, historical experiences and literacy journeys of the teachers using the River of Life data collection method. This is important because teachers originate from different socio-economic circumstances and these factors could influence how the teacher introduces children’s literature in Grade 1. Secondly, it was used to investigate the teachers’ perspectives on whether children’s literature in Grade 1 perpetuates a Westernized culture and whether equal opportunities are given to the learners to associate themselves with the prescriptive literature. Thirdly, to determine whether literary resources are distributed in a way that provides all children in Grade 1 with an equal opportunity to become readers who can resonate with the text. Lastly, to establish whether CAPS Home Language for Foundation Phase is promoting a curriculum that provides learners with fair and equal opportunities.

- b) Difference principle

This principle alludes that economic and social inequalities are justified if the inequalities would improve the welfare of the least advantaged (Kam, 2014:724). This means that these inequalities that exist are justifiable if and insofar they are arranged to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged members of society (Follesdal, 2015:4).

The difference principle will be applied to this research study to determine whether CAPS Home Language for Foundation Phase is promoting a curriculum that is beneficial to those who are the least advantaged. Additionally, whether the children's literature used in Grade 1 is promoting a hidden curriculum with different forms of stereotypes, that promote Eurocentric worldviews at the expense of Indigenous knowledge systems. According to Rawls, when the two principles of Social Justice are considered, it is not necessarily essential for the least favoured to contribute to investing in future generations (Rawls, 1971:292).

2.6.4.2 Criticism of Rawls's Theory of Justice

Mills (1997) observes that Rawls's Theory of Justice is the principle for a well-ordered society. As Mills points out, these principles of justice are not formulated to guide us in the "transition of actual societies to our own" and are based on Western political theory (Mills, 1997:59). Stone (2022:165) adds that transitional principles are much needed as individuals do not live in a society that is well-ordered but ill-ordered. Mills (1997) further argues that by not including the historical roots of oppression, Rawls made assumptions based on white male norms and therefore excluded women and people of colour. Stone (2022:165) emphasizes Mills' viewpoint by stating that Western societies have ample resources that the white citizenry bluntly refuses to share fairly with people of colour, which Rawls's theory on Social Justice does not address. Furthermore, Rawls argued that justice is a matter of fair reciprocity for mutual benefit, where persons are motivated to cooperate out of fairness, but Hartley (2014:410) observes that Rawls hardly wrote about the idea of reciprocity that informs his theory. Rawls also argues that capitalism does not provide all citizens with an equal opportunity to access positions of advantage and responsibility. However, Hunt (2013:54) argues that Rawls needs stronger criticism and a more conclusive discourse to argue that capitalism is unjust under his theory of Justice. In addition, Edor (2020:187) highly criticises the 'veil of ignorance', stating that it is created under an unrealistic situation that is temporary. Edor (2020:187) argues that when the veil of ignorance is to be removed, and people return to their different social ontologies, inordinate challenges will occur. Lastly, Follesdal (2015:4) asserts that there are no claims made by Rawls that the principles he suggests in his Social Justice theory apply to strategies to improve current unjust arrangements or how to remedy injustices of the

past. According to Follesdal (2015:12), the scope of Rawls's theory of Justice is merely applicable to communities under "favourable conditions".

The criticisms of Rawls's theory of Social Justice will be mitigated by highlighting that the study itself does not necessarily have a blanket and uncritical application of a theory as such. Rather, it will appreciate the ethical and political implications of Rawls's theory since the latter aids the theoretical strands of the study. I only explicated the criticisms of Rawls's theory to provide a context for the existing debates and limited the latter to the theoretical framework as an awareness of its existence, without favouring a particular criticism. Moreover, the study seeks to position Rawls's theory as a torch bearer to the study's search for a just pedagogical practice, while aiming to unlock what the study seeks to explore. Although this study does not treat the Social Justice theory uncritically, it seeks to learn both from Rawls's theoretical strengths and weaknesses because of the awareness that a blanket application of a single theory has the potential to weaken the study.

2.7 Chapter Summary

This literature review provided an overview of literary theory, its value, and aspects of children's literature. Moreover, a brief outline of the curriculum guidelines concerning children's literature was presented. Through this review, it has become apparent that teachers need to understand their role as agents of social change by approaching pedagogy as a social justice and human rights issue. Hlalele (2012:116) affirms the latter and states that teachers must analyse the injustices that affect not only teaching and learning but also the curriculum and the implementation thereof.

In the context of education as a social institution to establish social equality for all children, irrespective of whether they belong to a certain social class, race, or religion, or whether they are situated in a rural community, lack adequate housing, have limited access to educational facilities and healthcare, children have the right to quality basic education as a fundamental human right. The theoretical framework provides an apparency that Rawls's theory is formulated to address a fundamental problem of society namely, inequality. Accordingly, principles of justice were developed to address economic and social inequalities into "beneficial inconveniences" (Edor, 2020:188).

This chapter serves as a literature control and lens through which the findings of the research study will be discussed in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I provide an in-depth discussion of the research design and methodology that was utilized for this inquiry. From the outset, it was regarded as essential to ensure that the research design and methodology are befitting to the study and that they integrate harmoniously. The research design and method selected for the study was a case study underpinned in a qualitative approach in which a qualitative content analysis, a River of Life activity, a semi-structured interview and a focus group were employed for data collection. By making use of this research design, I had the opportunity to gain insight into lived experiences and explore the perspectives of Grade 1 teachers, regarding factors that influence teaching prescriptive literature. Firstly, I discuss the research design, followed by the methodology, site and participant selection. I then continue to address the data collection methods, explain how the data was analysed and declare the trustworthiness of the study. Lastly, my position as the researcher during the study is stated, how ethics were considered before and during the study, and in addition how this study can contribute to the research body in the field of education.

3.2 Research design

Since the research design encompasses all matters regarding the planning, executing processes and procedures of a research study, it was befitting to be guided by the aim, purpose, and objective of this study which are:

- To determine what teachers' perspectives are on the factors that influence teaching prescriptive literature in Grade 1
- To determine what Grade 1 teachers' perspectives are on the content of prescriptive literature in Grade 1
- To determine how Grade 1 teachers' literacy journeys, reflect the way that they teach children's literature

- To determine what preparation or training these teachers received specifically to teach literature in Grade 1
- To determine how Grade 1 teachers, interpret CAPS and implement this in their teaching
- To determine challenges experienced by Grade 1 teachers in teaching prescriptive literature

A qualitative approach, complemented by a case study research design was employed in a quest to explore richly textured contextual knowledge that would be able to provide a detailed and profound analysis of my research topic.

Simons (2009:18) defines a case study as a process of conducting a critical inquiry into a phenomenon, by using a systematic method, to ultimately understand the phenomenon. Yin (2014:16) argues that the definition of a case study is two-fold: “A case study is an empirical inquiry that (i) investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the ‘case’) in depth and within its real-world context, especially when (ii) the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be evident.”

This case study relied on a variety of evidence that was mainly produced for exploratory purposes through a qualitative content analysis, the River of Life activity, and systematic interviewing. Chopard and Przybylski (2021:1) postulate that an exploratory case study probes into what is essentially unknown. This was done to develop an understanding of the phenomenon of interest and should be guided by a specific purpose that frames the inquiry. Since the purpose of the study was to gain insight into the lives of Grade 1 teachers, understanding the meaning and perspectives they attach to lived experiences and ultimately factors that influence teaching prescriptive literature, an exploratory case study research design was suited to this study. The design produced descriptive data with a particular focus on real-life experiences (Brynard, Hanekom & Brynard, 2014:39).

Ishak & Abu Bakar (2014:31-32) attest that a case study can be a sufficient and appropriate design to explore and explain a particular phenomenon. Henning, van Rensburg and Smit (2004:41) affirm that a case study research design is typically employed to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and those involved.

Consequently, this design was a suitable approach as it allowed me to explore within context, by gaining an understanding of the lived experiences of the participants.

3.3 Methodology

In this section, I outlined the broad underpinnings of my chosen research methods. A qualitative approach, underpinned by an interpretivist paradigm was employed for this study. An interpretivist paradigm refers to gaining an in-depth understanding of meaningful daily life experiences that describe meaningful social action (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.*, 2014:280). According to Earthy and Cronin (2008:1), qualitative approaches have a long-standing relation with social research. Moreover, it aids researchers in comprehending the process behind the observed results, particularly because the researcher considers the feelings, thoughts and expressions of the participant (Gundumogula, 2021:299). It can therefore be concluded that a qualitative study is significant for examining and describing social dynamics (Akyıldız & Ahmed, 2021:4). It was envisaged that the research design together with an interpretivist paradigm would allow me to take an approach where I can comprehensively conduct my research and gain significant data on the research topic being studied. My approach to the study included the following sections: 1) Selection of site and participant; 2) Data collection including a qualitative content analysis, a River of Life activity, a semi-structured interview, and a focus group; 3) Data analysis. A discussion on attaining trustworthiness follows, as does my position throughout the study and how ethics were adhered to.

3.4 Selection of site and participant

The research study took place in the Breede River Valley sub-region of the Boland in the Western Cape, where the schools that were selected categorically fall under the Cape Winelands Education District. This research site was purposefully identified as it would be able to provide six participants who meet the requirements of the study. Three public schools were identified based on quintile and participant characteristics that suited the purpose of the study. These schools were decisively identified because they were low-resourced schools which is a more accurate reflection of the state of the majority of public schools in South Africa (Haffejee, Simelani & Mwanda, 2024:7).

Research indicates that schools in lower quintiles (no-fee paying schools) tend to achieve lower academic scores (Ogbonnaya & Awuah, 2019:8). Since the effective teaching of literature is instrumental to life-long academic achievement, schools in Quintile 1 were selected to investigate factors that influence teaching prescriptive literature in the first formal school year.

The population refers to all the persons who will be the focus of the study. Fundamentally, the population for this study was guided by the research question and the problem statement. A non-probability sampling method was employed, and purposive convenience sampling was done. Six information-rich key participants who were knowledgeable and could produce informative data on the phenomenon under study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:401), were recruited.

The sample selected was representative of the population under investigation. The sampling criterion for the participants in this study was:

- Teachers must be from the Quintile 1 schools,
- be a Grade 1 teacher,
- 30 years and older,
- teaching in the Cape Winelands Education District.

The 30 years+ cohort had the advantage of a minimum of five years of teaching experience, and it was envisioned that they would understand the responsibility that their responses could make an impact on curriculum development. It was envisaged that this cohort had developed an interest in making contributions that could assist in shaping what takes place in the educational setting.

3.5 Data collection

The methods that I utilized were qualitative content analysis as the first approach to data collection, followed by the River of Life activity, a semi-structured interview, and a focus group. Initially, I was only going to do semi-structured interviews with all the participants. However, after completing the River of Life activity through a workshop, I ascertained that four teachers in the study had several similar characteristics

concerning their background, history, educational upbringing, culture, and language. All four teachers were isiXhosa speaking. It was the prerogative of the participants to determine in which language they preferred the interviews to be done as this would allow them to better express themselves. One semi-structured interview was conducted, for the principal reason that the participant was an Afrikaans Grade 1 teacher and chose to have the interview in Afrikaans. The isiXhosa-speaking teachers chose to have their interviews in English. I therefore opted to explore the phenomenon with another data collection method, a focus group. By applying these qualitative data collection methods, the richness and depth of the data collected in the specific social context were ensured (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.*, 2014:173).

In the first phase of the data collection process, which was the qualitative content analysis, various prescriptive books that included the graded reading series (§2.3.3.6) and big books (§2.3.3.4) were withdrawn from the classroom and the content analysis was done without interrupting the academic program. The River of Life workshop was completed at the nearby college which provided the necessary infrastructure which allowed me to facilitate the workshop successfully. A semi-structured interview was also done at the college in a suitable educational environment, at the participant's request. The focus group was held at the school at the principal's request. Undertaking research in an educational setting and context enabled the participants to explore complex processes regarding their practice and produced a richer understanding of their culture, beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviours, and feelings that constructed their perspective.

3.5.1 Qualitative content analysis

Qualitative content analysis is defined as a data collection method where subjective interpretation of the text can be done through a systematic coding process with the identification of patterns or themes (Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.*, 2014:258; Shava, Hleza, Tlou, Shonhiwa & Mathonsi, 2021:554). The emphasis of this qualitative content analysis was therefore on the textual content as well as the visual narratives depicted in the Grade 1 prescriptive books that were selected for literacy development. According to Akyıldız and Ahmed (2021:10), qualitative content analysis is a significant research technique utilized to assess patterns, words and perceptions in the data

obtained. Contrary to the latter, Shava *et al.* (2021:557) state that qualitative content analysis is a time-consuming, labour-intensive and confusing process for novice researchers since data needs to be recorded before it can be analysed. However, this method was specifically selected as an efficient approach to bring forth underlying factors that influence teaching prescriptive literature in Grade 1. Various prescribed books, on three different reading levels, that ranged from easy to difficult, were identified and extracted from two schools. The Grade 1 prescribed books were scrutinized under four key areas: 1) Number of white characters in the book; 2) Number of black or darker characters in the book; 3) Number of times South African representation occurred in the book; 4) Number of Eurocentric elements in the book.

Since books were withdrawn from an Afrikaans and isiXhosa school, I could only commence with the qualitative content analysis after the isiXhosa books were translated into English through an independent translator, for my understanding and interpretation. Scrutinizing the prescribed books for Grade 1 under these key areas was beneficial to identifying emerging themes that could influence teaching prescriptive literature. Contrary to the following data collection methods, the qualitative content analysis was non-invasive but still an efficient technique to analyse a social phenomenon.

3.5.2 River of Life

The River of Life method is a data collection technique where visual narratives are used to help people tell stories of the past, present and future (Fisher & White, 2018). The technique is introduced as a visual platform, which takes the shape of a river drawing, where participants can identify their roles, how they fit into the bigger picture and where they can make the most impact. This method was originally used as an exercise for personal reflection, but it can also be tailored to utilise as a data collection method. The river presents a timeline of visual drawings that allows the researcher to scrutinize the 'big picture' or the 'whole story' of the participant (Institute of Development Studies, 2024). In this study, the River of Life data collection method was used to collect data from the participants about their personal literacy journeys. Indicatively, this method was utilized to determine what teachers' perspectives were of the factors that influenced teaching prescriptive literature in Grade 1, how their

personal literacy journeys reflected the way that they taught children's literature, their perspectives on the literary content that they were teaching and how they interpreted and implemented CAPS. Moreover, the method was used to establish the preparation or training they received to teach literature in Grade 1 and the challenges that they were experiencing with teaching prescriptive literature.

As part of thorough preparation and to ensure that the workshop activity had a successful outcome, a trial application of the River of Life method was conducted with a group of students as a class activity to reflect on their journey in a tertiary institution. This provided a better understanding of how I needed to prepare and present the workshop, the stationary I had to provide and how to choose and prepare the venue.

Through visualization, six participants were expected to highlight their literacy journeys (from childhood until the present), which indicated habits, preferences for books (throughout their lives), their knowledge of children's literature, their perspectives of CAPS, and the challenges that they were or had experienced. These focal points were predominantly selected because the teacher's knowledge of children's literature, as well as their involvement in literacy activities, has an influence on the attitudes and the development of young readers. In addition, the teacher's reading habits and preferences can influence what children read and how they comprehend what they read. Cremin *et al*, (2008:2) substantiate the latter and aver that these focal points are unequivocally a pre-requisite if teachers want to sustain, develop and nurture positive attitudes in young readers. Furthermore, it was able to identify whether the teacher was developing a skillset where children could choose books according to preference and whether the teacher would be able to recommend books that could help build their identities.

3.5.2.1 Implementing the River of Life as a data collection method

Proper preparation was critical to the success of the River of Life workshop. The venue was prepared for the optimum functioning of this session on a quiet Saturday morning with no diversions, and a spacious seating area with tables and the necessary materials.

The process of implementation entailed a comprehensive explanation of the workshop and the activity, highlighting key focus areas in their literacy journeys as well as plotting their literacy journeys using the River of Life method. The participants were encouraged to think about visual obstacles to represent the most significant elements that had contributed to shaping their River of Life experience: a book, a boat; a fish; the sun; rocks; grass; etc. (Mercer, 2019).

Since the River of Life activity required recalling emotionally important times, thoughts, places, feelings, and experiences, one participant withdrew from the study. She mentioned that the activity stirred too many past experiences which included historical injustice such as Bantu education and how she was deprived of certain opportunities, especially with her educational career and later as a teacher. Counselling sessions were recommended to mitigate psychological risks. The River of Life activity was followed by a semi-structured interview and a focus group.

3.5.3 Semi-structured interview

A semi-structured interview was a flexible data collection method that allowed me to gain a comprehensive understanding of the participant's perspectives (Baškarada, 2014:8). This was fundamental to answering the research question: *What are the teacher's perspectives on factors that influence teaching prescriptive literature in Grade 1?* I conducted a semi-structured interview with one Grade 1 teacher. McMillan and Schumacher (2001:446) suggest that qualitative interviewing requires asking open-ended questions. Accordingly, I developed a comprehensive set of open-ended questions with relevance to the fundamental principles of Social Justice and conducted a 45-minute semi-structured interview in Afrikaans, as this was the language of choice by the participant. In doing so, questions could be refocused or prompted for more information if interesting responses emerged, and the participant could comfortably express her thoughts, beliefs, and perspectives. It was pivotal to engage this data collection method as a means of gaining an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon being studied. An additional advantage of utilizing this data collection method was that I had control over the line of questioning (Creswell, 2014:191). Since I am also Afrikaans-speaking, the interview lent itself to more free-flowing conversation because the participant was comfortably expressive in her home language. As a result,

the themes that emerged differed slightly from the themes that emerged in the focus group.

3.5.4 Focus group

Gundumogula (2021:299) postulates that focus group discussions have been increasing in qualitative research in the past decade and are particularly useful as a complement to other data collection methods. Du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.* (2014:183) describe a focus group as a group interview where participants are interviewed simultaneously in a natural but structured way. For this study, the focus group consisted of four isiXhosa-speaking, Grade 1 teachers from previously disadvantaged backgrounds in a low-resourced school. This was important because the aim was to determine how their personal literacy journeys reflected how they taught children's literature, what their perspectives were on the content that they taught, how they interpreted CAPS and implemented this in their teaching. Furthermore, they shared the challenges that they were experiencing when teaching prescriptive literature. This was done to answer the research question: *What are the teacher's perspectives on factors that influence teaching prescriptive literature in Grade 1?*

I prepared a spacious room with sufficient light and ventilation with a circular seating arrangement. This allowed participants to see and engage with each other and promoted interaction with greater spontaneity. After welcoming the participants, I explained the rules for the focus group and how it would be conducted, e.g., one participant spoke at a time. I prepared a set of pre-determined questions but also allowed the discussion to flow without going off-topic. The advantages of this data collection method were that it was a fast, effective, flexible and proficient way of accessing data from a specific social group (Akyıldız & Ahmed, 2021:9).

3.6 Data analysis

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:462), data analysis can be defined as a continuous cyclical process that is integrated into all phases of qualitative research. Shava *et al.* (2021:553) further define qualitative data analysis as a subjective interpretation of the content of text data. This process primarily materializes through

the systematic classification process of coding and identifying the manifest content of communication. Coding is concerned with the process of organising the data by bracketing text and writing a word representing a category in the respective margins (Creswell, 2014:197). However, a code in a qualitative inquiry is a short phrase or word that symbolically assigns summative attributes to language-based or visual data (Saldaña, 2013:3). Themes, mainly referring to a repetitive idea, that emerged from this data were therefore the outcome of coding.

Saldaña (2013:14) cautions researchers not to mistake themes for codes. Data to be coded may consist of interview transcripts, drawings, participant observation field notes and literature (Saldaña, 2013:3). In this study, the data that was coded consisted of prescriptive literature, visual narratives or drawings, an interview transcript, and a focus group transcript. The Saldaña coding method allows themes to derive from specific codes and was therefore suited to the study. Furthermore, Onwuegbuzie, Frels and Hwang (2016:146) suggest that the Saldaña Coding method is a suitable method of data analysis for novice researchers, particularly those who engage in social research. The model for data analysis of this research study was therefore rooted in Saldaña's Coding method (Saldaña, 2013).

As guided by Saldaña (2013), the convention of this qualitative data analysis consisted of two cycles. In the first cycle coding process, the portion of data to be coded ranged in magnitude from a single word or depiction to an entire page. In the second cycle coding process, the data coded consisted of longer passages of text and analytical memos (Saldaña, 2013:3). The second cycle therefore required analytical skills such as classifying, integrating, prioritizing, abstracting, interpreting, synthesizing and conceptualizing the data (Onwuegbuzie *et al.*, 2016:146).

Onwuegbuzie *et al.* (2016:146) outline a framework for novice researchers which primarily requires identifying and extracting relevant works from the data collected:

- 1) Identifying and extracting relevant works from the extant literature to analyse and synthesize.
- 2) Storing and organizing these works.

- 3) Determining what subsets of these works to code, as well as what components of each selected work (i.e., whole work vs. part of the work) to code.
- 4) Determining which of Saldaña's 32 codes to use *a priori*.
- 5) Coding each work using the selected Saldaña codes.
- 6) Conducting a cross-case analysis of the inferences (e.g., categories, sub-themes, themes, meta-themes) that emerge from the Saldaña coding process.

I had to establish which of the 32 codes of the Saldaña Coding method would be applied. I opted for thematic coding which is a process of theming the data by selecting and deselecting codes to generate themes (Onwuegbuzie *et al.*, 2016:139). In accordance with the latter, data collected through a qualitative content analysis, a River of Life activity, an interview, and a focus group were qualitatively analysed.

3.6.1 Qualitative content analysis

Keeping my research questions in mind, I first selected the samples, which are the prescribed books for Grade 1, from the respective Afrikaans and isiXhosa classrooms. After translating the isiXhosa prescribed books to English through an independent translator, I meticulously scrutinized the prescribed reading series of both schools. I then continued to identify and define the categories to be applied by tabulating the raw data under the following themes:

- Number of white characters in the book
- Number of black or darker characters in the book
- Number of times South African representation occurred in the book
- Number of Eurocentric elements in the book

Following this convention allowed me to condense raw data into categories or themes based on valid interpretations and inferences. According to Shava *et al.* (2021:554), this process makes use of inductive reasoning. Thus, themes and categories emerge from the data through the researcher's careful examination and constant comparison. For this reason, I juxtaposed the findings in my discussion in Chapter 4. Insertions of depictions from the Grade 1 prescribed books were used for juxtaposition since the

analysis of visual material was organized and presented through the double lenses of aesthetics (Sørensen, 2015:49).

3.6.2 River of Life

Analysing the visual drawings of participants took great comprehension and collaborative skills. The different levels of creative skills of the participants' visual representation of their literacy journey differed from basic to expressive. It was therefore imperative for each participant to discuss their literacy journey during the workshop. Participants explained what they were drawing and what it represented during the workshop, and I noted the commentary attentively. In analysing the River of Life visual narratives, the data comprised both the visual images of the participants' literacy journey and my notes from the discussions. It was especially important to note what participants were saying to eliminate any ambiguity in my analysis of their literacy journeys.

Participants were encouraged to:

- indicate their knowledge and preference for children's literature,
- indicate key influences on their journey,
- indicate their involvement in literacy activities,
- demonstrate access to literary resources,
- indicate challenges in their literacy journey,
- express experiences with the CAPS curriculum.

Guided by Rose's (2001) work on visual methodologies, I established a working method that comprised four steps:

1. finding your images
2. devising your categories for coding
3. coding the images
4. analysing the results

After implementing the two cycles of coding, I subsequently applied thematic analysis to elicit themes from the visual narratives provided. I present the discourse on this analysis in Chapter 4.

3.6.3 Semi-structured interview and focus group

An undifferentiated method of analysis was used for both the semi-structured interview and the focus group. For this reason, I will be discussing the method of analysis for both in this section. My objective was primarily to organise and structure the data through the two cycles of coding. However, Jnanathapaswi (2021:4) postulates that in the phases of analysing participant verbatim data, the researcher goes through various cognitive and creative processes that include clustering, comparing, and conceptual cohering. Hence, he suggests that the tactic to use greatly depends on the cognitive style of the researcher. Since my cognitive style greatly depends on senses, visual and auditory, I commenced by familiarizing myself with the data by doing narrative preparation such as transcribing the data and rereading the transcriptions while noting initial ideas. In addition, I also listened to the semi-structured interview and focus group interview repeatedly. Even though this was a laborious phase and these initial processes required meticulous attention to emergent patterns and repetitive ideas, it assisted immensely with keeping track of participants' quotes, categorizing, analysing and constructing themes from codes.

In the first cycle of coding, the raw dataset was read line by line. Line-by-line coding can be defined as the practice of micro-analysis where the researcher reads through all data text, line by line while marking words and phrases relevant to the study (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.*, 2014:240). I did line-by-line coding by highlighting the phrases in different colours relevant to a particular idea.

Saldaña (2013) suggests that thematic analysis is a practical and effective means of second-cycle analysis. The goal of the second cycle of coding was to develop a sense of categorical and thematic organization from the chunk of codes in the First Cycle (Jnanathapaswi, 2021:9). I was able to identify themes from data provided by the participants that were coded in the first cycle and applied the most descriptive wording to place the themes that emerged into categories.

In essence, qualitative analysis of the semi-structured interview and focus group interview required the organisation of the data, application of different levels of coding and the subsequent generation of themes. In conclusion, I conducted a cross-case analysis of the inferences that emerged from the coding process. The inferences refer to categories, sub-themes, themes, and meta-themes (Onwuegbuzie *et al.*, 2016:146). Utilizing the Saldaña Coding method enabled me to understand social reality in a subjective manner rather than a scientific manner.

3.7 Trustworthiness

Creswell (2014:201) states that to ensure qualitative validity, the researcher needs to check for the accuracy of findings and that qualitative reliability is concerned with the consistency of the researcher's approach across different projects. Guba and Lincoln (1985) developed the concept of trustworthiness with a specific criterion for a qualitative inquiry. They argue that trustworthiness consists of sub-divisions, namely, credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Guba & Lincoln, 1985, in Simons, 2009:128). The latter criteria were used in this research study to establish trustworthiness.

3.7.1 Credibility

According to du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.* (2014:258), credibility refers to the accuracy with which the researcher interprets the data collected from participants. Simons, (2009:128) specifically emphasises accuracy in reflecting the situation, timeliness, and relevance. Given the data collection methods utilized, the credibility of this research study was increased as I spent long periods with the participants in a quest to gain insight into their lives and lived experiences. All efforts were made to interpret the data collected in such a way that it was believable from the participants' perspective. I maintained credibility by using an accurate reflection of the information provided by the participants and additionally checked for misinformation by clarifying information with the participants.

3.7.2 Transferability

Transferability refers to the degree to which findings can be transferred to a different context with different respondents, and deliver parallel results (Vicent, 2015:12). In essence, it implies the extent to which the results, as well as the analysis, can be utilized beyond this specific research study. Li (2004:305) suggests that to establish transferability, the researcher should make use of a 'thick description'. This concept suggests that the researcher should provide rich and meticulous information on the context of the study and all research processes, from data collection to the production of the final report. I established transferability in this research study as I elucidated extensive information about the study that can inform other researchers to replicate the study using similar conditions in other contexts or settings.

3.7.3 Dependability

Dependability raises matters referring to the quality of the process of integration between the data collection methods, data analysis and the theory selected (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.*, 2014:259). I aimed to ensure that my study's findings were consistent with the data that I had collected. Moreover, it needs to be repeatable; this means that if other researchers should scrutinize the data, they will arrive at parallel findings, interpretations and conclusions. Statistic Solutions (2022) suggests that an *external audit* be done where another researcher conducts an *inquiry audit* on the research study. In this research study, dependability was established through my supervisor who fulfilled the role of auditor, examining my research process and the accuracy of my findings.

3.7.4 Confirmability

du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.* (2014:259) state that confirmability refers to how well the data collected supports the findings and interpretations of the researcher. Since confirmability indicates how well the findings and interpretations flow from the data collected, it was imperative to describe the research process meticulously. This research study reflects the narrative of the participants and findings clearly as derived from the data. In addition, the confirmability strategy used in this study is triangulation.

3.7.5 Triangulation

According to Creswell, (2014:201), triangulation involves different sources of information whereby evidence is examined and used to build a coherent justification for themes. Creswell (2014:201) recommends utilizing different approaches as this will enhance the researcher's ability to assess the accuracy of the findings. McMillan and Schumacher (2001:408) therefore stress the fact that multi-method strategies do permit triangulation. Therefore, a combination of three strategies was employed to enhance trustworthiness in the data collection process. This includes the use of multi-method strategies, mechanically recorded data and participant verbatim language (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:408). It can therefore be stated that methodological triangulation was used to establish the trustworthiness of findings in this research study.

3.8 The researcher's position

With the commencement of the data collection process, my position was to undertake the role of a facilitator, particularly due to the River of Life data collection method. In the final steps of the data collection process, where a semi-structured interview and a focus group were conducted, my role was necessitated to change to an interviewer. Creswell (2014:201) describes these roles in general as the researcher being the inquirer, typically involved in a sustained and intensive experience with participants. However, my involvement was minimal. This was essential as it allowed my participants' narratives to flow (Earthy & Cronin, 2008:8).

Concerning my role in mitigating bias, I am not an employee of the Western Cape Education Department hence I did not foresee any influences that could hinder objectivity or jeopardise the interpretation of the data collected. Additionally, I refrained from allowing any biases that I might have to cloud the analysis of the data.

3.9 Ethical considerations

McMillan and Schumacher (2001:195) emphasize the significance of understanding ethical and legal responsibility in research, particularly educational research since it

involves human beings. Permission for this research study was granted by various authorities that include, the Education Faculty Ethics Committee (EFEC) CPUT, the Western Cape Education Department, the principals of the NQ1 schools identified, as well as the six participants.

After being granted ethical clearance by CPUT and the Western Cape Education Department, I contacted gatekeepers telephonically and informed them about the research study. In my pursuit of seeking an 'in principle' agreement, I immediately sent an e-mail outlining the study, data collection methods and why this study was important for Grade 1. A meeting was arranged with gatekeepers via e-mail with telephonic confirmation. After being granted permission by the gatekeeper, a date and time were set where I engaged the teachers and explained that this study offered an opportunity to state their views, share ideas and defend their interests. This was done to establish an open working and trustworthy relationship with the participants.

Even though the gatekeeper gave consent, consent from the participants was still obligatory. As du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.* (2014:264) aver, it is of paramount importance that the participants are comprehensively informed of expectations during the study, how outcomes will be used and published as well as how their identities will be protected. These aspects were thoroughly clarified before the commencement of the data collection process. Participants were also provided with the option to have all the information translated into a language that they understood.

With written informed consent from the participants, I comprehensively explained how confidentiality would be protected and how privacy would be maintained. Confidentiality in research refers to a condition where the data collected will not be reported in such a way that participants become recognizable (Kvale, 2009:26). This suggests that the identities of the participants are known to the researcher but will not be disclosed or discovered by others (du Plooy-Cilliers *et al.*, 2014:267). To comply with the confidentiality and anonymity rule of ethics, I made use of pseudonyms and unique identifiers and handled all data collected as highly confidential. At the same time, there was a common understanding that the findings would become public. All documented data were securely stored at a residential address and safeguarded by a computer-protected password. Participation in this research study was solely voluntary

and participants had the liberty to withdraw at any stage of the study. Respect for the participants' welfare and human dignity was highly regarded at all times. No harm was done to the participants at any stage of the data collection process and risks were duly monitored and mitigated.

3.10 Contributions of the study

Limited research has been done on prescriptive literature in the Grade 1 classroom, particularly referring to research studies that place the teachers' perspectives on factors that influence teaching prescriptive children's literature in the Grade 1 classroom under scrutiny. Given the significant function of the teacher as the mediator of acquiring and developing literacy, it is imperative to hear and perceive their perspectives on the latter topic. Failure to do so can result in catastrophic repercussions.

This study aimed to build knowledge that could contribute to teaching children's literature and inform curriculum development in the Foundation Phase. It attempts to raise public awareness of the significance of choosing suitable children's literature in the Grade 1 classroom context that can make substantial contributions to the holistic development of South African children. As a means of contributing to the body of knowledge, I aspire to share the outcomes of this study on conference platforms, the institutional repository, and the Western Cape Education Department. Additionally, I will make recommendations to the Western Cape Education Department as well as institutions that train Foundation Phase teachers in Chapter 5.

3.11 Conclusion

Collecting data from the research population was a challenge. Teachers were overwhelmed with the workload but saw this study as an opportunity to speak out and voice their perspectives on the current CAPS curriculum, the literature they are compelled to use for literacy development as well as the challenges that they are confronted with when teaching prescriptive literature in Grade 1. The data collection process was extensive, laborious, and required diligence. However, conducting a qualitative content analysis, a River of Life activity, a semi-structured interview and a

focus group produced self-reflective knowledge and prescriptive data that was critical for the success of the study. Information-rich participants from different historical backgrounds contributed to the study to ensure an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study from different perspectives, which also contributed to the credibility of the study.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, the methodology I used to collect the data was introduced. To determine the factors that influence teaching prescriptive literature in Grade 1 and gain the teachers' perspectives thereof, qualitative data were collected and analysed. The data were collected to answer the research question and sub-questions as indicated in Chapter 1, which are:

- What are the teachers' perspectives on factors that influence teaching prescriptive literature in Grade 1?
- What are the depictions and content of prescriptive literature in Grade 1?
- What are the teachers' perspectives on the content of the prescriptive literature in Grade 1?
- How do Grade 1 teachers' personal literacy journeys reflect how they teach children's literature?
- What preparation or training did Grade 1 teachers receive to teach Grade 1 literature?
- How do Grade 1 teachers interpret CAPS and implement this in their teaching?
- What are the challenges experienced by teachers in teaching prescriptive literature in Grade 1?

Data were collected from one population group, Grade 1 teachers from three schools in the Cape Winelands Education District. In this chapter, I discuss how qualitative data that were collected through qualitative content analysis (§3.6.1), a River of Life activity (§3.6.2), a semi-structured interview, and a focus group (§3.6.3) were analysed.

4.2 Description of participants

In this section, the biographic information of the participants is provided as a frame of reference for the analysis. The cohort for this study consisted of participants with more

than five years of experience. All the participants are still currently teaching, and demographics indicate a significant number of years of experience within the field of education and teaching.

Table 4.1: Biographic information of Grade 1 teachers

Section A Biographical information	<i>f</i>	%
1. Gender		
Female	6	100
Male	0	0
2. Race		
African	4	67
Coloured	1	17
White	1	17
3. Home language		
Afrikaans	2	33
isiXhosa	4	67
English	0	0
4. Age		
35 – 40	1	17
41 – 45	0	0
46 – 50	1	17
51 – 55	1	17
56 – 60	2	32
61- 65	1	17
5. Teaching experience (in years) in the Foundation Phase environment		
11 – 15	1	17
16 – 20	2	33
21 – 25	2	33
26 – 30	1	17

As stated in Chapter 3, it was anticipated that participants older than 30 years had the advantage of a minimum of 5 years of teaching experience. It was therefore envisioned that they would understand that their responses could make significant contributions in shaping the educational setting with regard to prescriptive literature in Grade 1 and in addition, curriculum development. The discussion of the demographic variables follows:

- **Gender**

All six respondents were female indicating a 100% female participation in this research study.

- **Race**

Respondents belonged to three racial groups, namely Coloured, African, and White. Four respondents were African indicating a 66.5% representation in the study. One coloured (16,75%) and one white (16,75%) respondent represented their respective racial groups.

- **Home language**

Respondents mainly represented three languages spoken in the Western Cape which are Afrikaans, English, and isiXhosa. Four respondents' Home Language was isiXhosa resulting in a 66% representation of isiXhosa. However, the River of Life data collection method, as well as the focus group, were conducted in English for conversational purposes. Afrikaans was the home language of two respondents indicating a 33% representation of the Afrikaans language.

- **Age**

The age of the respondents varied and ranged from 36 – 65 years. The age groups between 35 – 40, 46 – 50, 51 – 55 and 61 – 65 held a 17% representation in their respective groups. Two of the respondents represented the age group between 56 - 60, resulting in a 32% representation. None of the respondents were in the age group of 41 - 45 years.

- **Teaching experience**

All the respondents had more than 10 years of teaching experience. The majority of the participants had more than 15 years of teaching experience. Teaching experience mainly varied from 15 years to 29 years in the Foundation Phase of education.

4.3 Data Analysis

Before I commenced with the qualitative content analysis of the prescriptive books used in Grade 1, I had to complete all the translations of the books, from isiXhosa to English, and obtain a thorough comprehension of the content, context and depictions in the book. After I managed to collect all the data, transcriptions of the interview and focus group were done. The River of Life data collection method required superior interpretive skills since visual narratives had to be analysed. Since the population consisted of three different races and cultures, cultural competence was critical (Onwuegbuzie *et al.*, 2016:145; Christ & Sharma, 2018). This was imperative because understanding the culture and context that the participants articulated from, mitigated misinterpreting responses and information that could be crucial for the study. Various themes that were identified through the cyclical process of coding (§3.6), showed common points of reference. Vaismoradi, Turunen, Jones & Snelgrove (2016:5) aver that a theme is primarily used as an attribute, concept, descriptor, or element that organizes a group of repeating ideas. Essentially these themes enabled me to answer the research questions in Chapter 5. In this chapter, responses and perspectives of the interview and focus group are substantiated with participant verbatim quotations. Saldana's Coding method was utilized to analyse the data.

4.3.1 Qualitative content analysis

To answer the research sub-question "What are the depictions and content of prescriptive literature in Grade 1?", a qualitative content analysis (§3.5.1) was employed to examine and understand the content of the prescriptive literature. This was done because Western epistemologies and Eurocentric indoctrination (§2.6.3) enjoy carte blanche in the South African schooling system while viable Indigenous epistemologies, which can address inequalities and have the potential to address the literacy crisis in South Africa, are ignored (Mahabeer, 2020:5). Since this study is underpinned in Social Justice (§2.6.1), it was critical to investigate the content of prescriptive literature to redistribute and deconstruct distorted information so that there was a balance of information to the benefit of learners (Lebeloane, 2017:5). As a point of departure, I extracted the content of the books and examined meanings, patterns, or themes that emerged in the text or pictures or were latent, referring to hidden

messages in children's literature. The objective, firstly, was to determine how frequently white and black or darker characters appeared in the prescriptive books. Secondly, to scrutinize the presence of two concepts in children's literature which are Eurocentrism and the representation of South Africa. Seventeen prescriptive books for Grade 1, from two schools, were examined. School A was an Afrikaans school and School B was an isiXhosa school which fell under the Cape Winelands Education District. Prescriptive books from both schools were qualitatively analysed under the following sections:

- Number of white characters in the book
- Number of black or darker characters in the book
- Number of times South African representation occurred in the book
- Number of Eurocentric elements in the book

4.3.1.1 Prescriptive Grade 1 books from an Afrikaans school (School A)

At school A, I identified and extracted nine Afrikaans books from different levels of the Oxford Storieboom (Reading tree) reading series (§3.5.1). The books were then examined and analysed under the sections listed above. Accordingly, the quantities indicate the number of times the particular facet occurred in the book. The table aims to organise the detailed qualitative data and highlight patterns and trends that were uncovered. In my discourse, I placed the English names of the books in brackets behind the Afrikaans names of the books to assist the reader.

Table 4.2: Prescriptive Grade 1 books from an Afrikaans school (School A)

Oxford Storieboom reading series	Gaan weg, Flappie!	Die dolfyne	Kalla se skoene	'n Nuwe hond	Niemand wil speel nie	Op die strand	Rooi en blou	Vlooi se partytjie	Wegkruipertjie
White characters	5	1	12	6	11	24	20	5	4
Darker/ Black characters	2	2	2	0	2	0	4	0	1
South African representation	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Eurocentric elements	1	1	0	0	3	1	1	1	1

- **Author and illustrator**

The prescriptive books for Grade 1 were authored by Roderick Hunt, a British children's author, who wrote a series titled Oxford Reading Tree which was then translated to *Oxford Storieboom* for South African Grade 1 Afrikaans classes. British illustrator, Alex Brychta, collaborated with Roderick Hunt for the Oxford Reading Tree series. Children's literature authored by Hunt, with most illustrations by Alex Brychta, is used to teach reading in 80% of British primary schools and more than 120 countries worldwide. For this qualitative analysis, I subjectively extracted books from Phases 1, 2 and 3 for the beginner to advanced reader.

- **Characters in the stories**

From the table above it is evident that white or lighter characters dominated the depictions in the nine books from the reading series. The main characters of the story, Mamma, Pappa, Biebie, Kalla and Vlooi, are all depicted as white characters. In effect, the protagonists in the reading series are all white. This is problematic itself as the darker characters are all secondary characters in the reading series. In one book, *Op die strand* (On the beach), all the characters on the beach are white, which is an extremely unrealistic depiction of beachgoers in South Africa. Of the nine books, there was only one book where black characters were more than white characters. Three of the books did not depict any black characters in their storylines or depictions.

- **The setting of the stories**

The setting of the story refers to the time and place that the story takes place. It is daytime in all the stories, but the majority of the books do not depict the cultural or societal surroundings of South Africa. The illustrations of idealistic wooden houses and picket fencing (Figure 4.1) are regularly present but are highly uncommon in South Africa. The setting in the book, *Die Dolfyne* (The Dolphins), is a dolphinarium (Figure 4.2), whereas dolphins in South Africa are oceanic. Therefore, this is an impractical and misguided representation of an aquatic mammal, with little relevance to the South African child's frame of reference. In essence, none of the settings in the nine stories

of the *Oxford Storieboom* reading series unequivocally portray a South Africa that the Grade 1 reader can relate to.

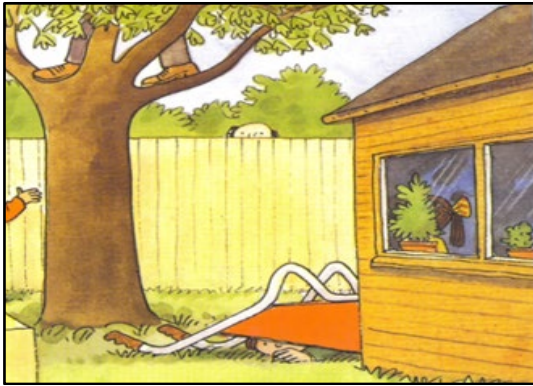


Figure 4.1: Wooden house and picket fence



Figure 4.2: Dolphin in dolphinarium

- **South African representation**

From the data in Table 4.2, only one out of the nine books, *Op die strand* (On the beach), displayed a potential element of South Africa which is a donkey and donkey ride. The name of the donkey is *Langoor* (Long ear) (Figure 4.3). However, no other indication was given that the setting is in South Africa or that it is a South African recreational activity.



Figure 4.3: Donkey and donkey rides

- **Eurocentric elements**

The presence of Eurocentric elements was evident in the stories from the reading series. Regularly displayed are wooden houses with picket fencing, which is a concept of British descent and not a conventional resemblance of South African buildings, houses, or fencing. The red free-standing pillar mailbox (Figure 4.4) is regarded as a

British cultural icon used to send mail. Furthermore, the British King's guard (Figure 4.5) appears five times in the story of *Vlooi se partytjie* (Vlooi's party). Cowboys (Figure 4.6) and American Marvel superhero, Spiderman (Figure 4.7), are also depicted in the story of *Niemand wil speel nie* (Nobody wants to play). Essentially the presence and influence of Western countries are apparent as seen in the visual extracts below.



Figure 4.4: Red British mailbox

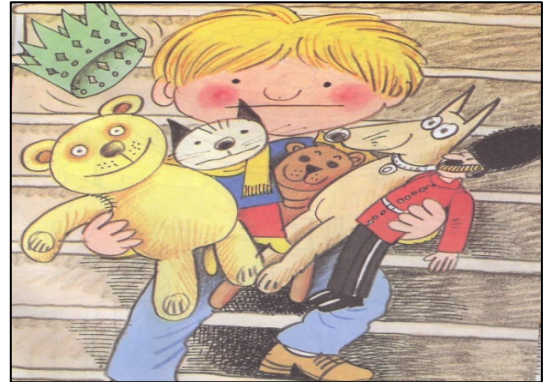


Figure 4.5: British King's Guard

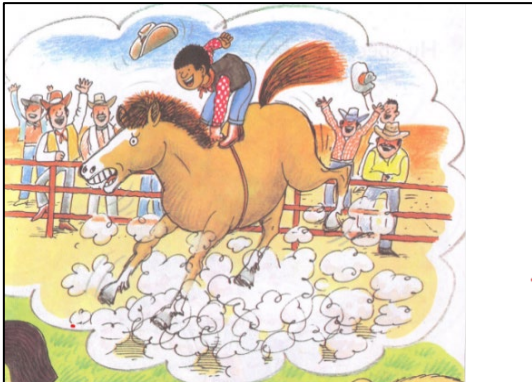


Figure 4.6: Cowboys

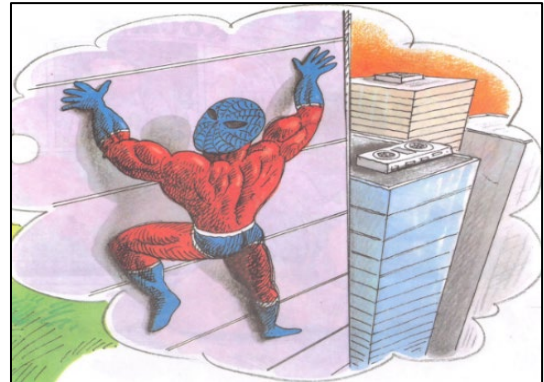


Figure 4.7: Spiderman

- **Hidden messages**

In the book, *Niemand wil speel nie* (Nobody wants to play), Wim is the main character. Out of the nine books, this is the only book where the main character is male and black. On the occasion where the black male is the protagonist, the title of the book can be perceived as a state of anguish and helplessness. Wim is depicted as angry because nobody wants to play with him. The text on page 1 reads "*Wim is kwaad*" meaning Wim is angry (Figure 4.8). Smith (2011:190) refers to this phenomenon as 'hidden dehumanization' where darker characters in children's literature evoke fear, violence, or anger.



Figure 4.8: Angry Wim



Figure 4.9: All-white soccer team

In addition, the plot of *Rooi en Blou* (Red and Blue) is about two teams playing football, also known as soccer in South Africa. All the characters in the red team are white (Figure 4.9). Given the South African history of racial segregation, bigotry, and the previous South African constitution that prohibited racially mixed teams from competitive sports, these hidden messages and depictions are detrimental to the development of young minds and overcoming racialism. Even though these phenomena are not explicit, Evans *et al.*, (2018:13) cautions against unconscious biases that frequently occur in children's literature when the authors are white.

4.3.1.2 Prescriptive Grade 1 books from an isiXhosa school (School B)

At school B, I identified eight isiXhosa prescriptive books from a variety of reading series provided to the school. Half of the books were part of the Rainbow Workbook series, provided and published by the Department of Basic Education. Two books were published by Oxford University Press: Southern Africa and two books were part of an isiXhosa language series reader by Shutter and Shooter. The same convention for analysis was followed with the isiXhosa as with the Afrikaans prescriptive books.

Table 4.3: Prescriptive Grade 1 books from an isiXhosa school (School B)

	Incwadi Enkulu yamaba- lana 3	Incwadi Enkulu yamaba- lana 4	Incwadi eNkulu	Isikhuk ukazi esibom- vu	Sichumile isiXhosa Uliso nabahlobo bakhe	Sichumile isiXhosa Uthando Lwabazali	Silinga- nisa iimpa- hle	Food of many colours
White characters	13	0	0	0	0	11	2	0
Darker/ Black characters	16	0	11	0	64	4	6	5
South African representatio n	2	0	3	0	1	2	1	2
Eurocentric elements	2	2	0	1	0	1	0	0

- Author and illustrator**

Half of the isiXhosa prescriptive books were books that were published by the Department of Basic Education and did not state the authors. Three of these books contained multiple stories. The authors of the remaining prescriptive books were established South African children's literature authors, namely, Tracy Blues, Gcina Mhlophe, Sindiwe Magona, Colleen Nonkululelo Gqamlana, and Ntombokuqala Bokoloshe. Natalie Hinrichsen and Alzette Prins were the South African illustrators for their respective stories.

- Characters in the stories**

The data in Table 4.3 indicates that darker, or black characters dominated the prescriptive books of School B. The two prescriptive books that did not depict black characters were animal stories with moral lessons. Five of the eight prescriptive books did not contain any white characters and two of those were animal stories with moral lessons. One of the stories, *Uthando lwabazali* (Parent's Love), started with photographed characters that changed to animated characters later in the story. These depictions made it challenging to follow the story.

- The setting of the stories**

The setting of the majority of the stories was on a farm with either farm animals or people working on the farm. The setting of the stories was relatable and relevant to a

South African context e.g., pumpkins on the roof, corn plantations (Figure 4.10), and yellow minibus taxis for school transport (Figure 4.11).



Figure 4.10: Maize farm and pumpkins on the roof



Figure 4.11: Yellow minibus taxi

- **South African representation**

The qualitative analysis indicates that all the prescriptive books portrayed representation of South Africa except for two of the books that were animal stories. The animal stories were English fairytales with moral lesson stories that did not originate in Africa and were translated into isiXhosa. Representative depictions include a grandma wearing traditional attire holding a cup with a South African flag printed on it (Figure 4.12), a girl wearing a traditional dress with what appears to be a traditional isiXhosa beaded necklace (Figure 4.13), a woman with traditional attire taking a bus (Figure 4.14), a conventional South African woman with a 'doek' (head scarf) and two children eating maize meal (pap) (Figure 4.15).



Figure 4.12: South African flag



Figure 4.13: Girl with traditional wear



Figure 4.14: Lady with isiXhosa attire



Figure 4.15: Lady with a headscarf

- **Eurocentric elements**

Table 4.3 indicates that half (4) of the eight prescriptive books contained Eurocentric concepts that conveyed Western epistemology irrelevant to the child's development or frame of reference. In the book *Uthando lwabazali* (Parent's Love), the father encourages the children to eat a healthy English breakfast (Figure 4.16) every day, that consists of eggs, milk, cheese, strawberries, bread, and butter. However, a customary isiXhosa breakfast is Mieliepap porridge. Three Little Pigs (Figure 4.17) is an English fairytale that was translated into isiXhosa with the big, bad wolf being the protagonist. The relevance of the story becomes questionable as wolves are not native to South Africa. Furthermore, in *Incwadi Enkulu yamabalana Incwadi 3* (Big Book 3), American Marvel superheroes like Superman (Figure 4.18) Spiderman (Figure 4.19) and were examples of dress-up characters in the story *ltheko lomhla wokuzalwa* (The birthday party).

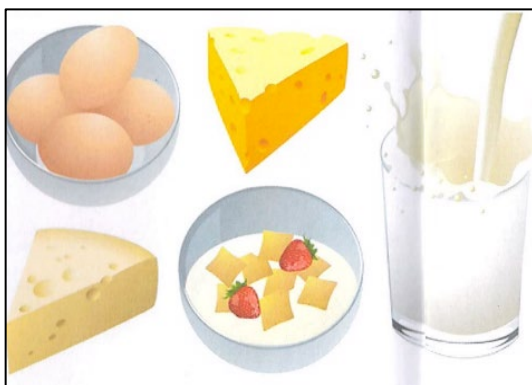


Figure 4.16: English breakfast ingredients

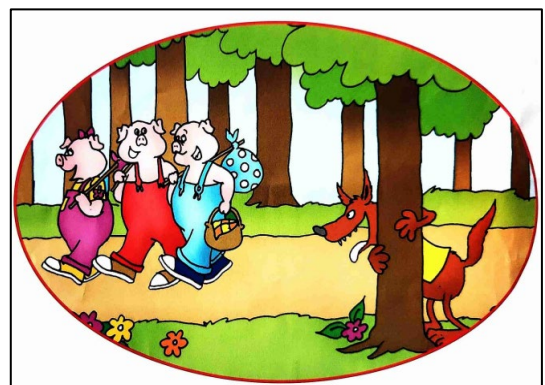


Figure 4.17: The Big Bad Wolf



Figure 4.18: Superman



Figure 4.19: Spiderman

- **Hidden message**

Since children's literature constructs and conveys messages about the child's culture, cultural understandings, beliefs, settings and life experiences (Adam *et al.*, 2019:551) it is significant to note that the depiction (Figure 4.20) opposed gender stereotypes and a sexist ideology. Since males are often portrayed as the farm truck driver (Figure 4.20) in children's stories, the depiction addresses gender stereotyping by portraying a female as the truck driver. This is commendable as the kind of literature children are exposed to influences and shapes their modes of thinking about general perceptions of social life (Monoyiou & Symeonidou, 2016:2; Beckett, Ellison, Barrett & Shah, 2010:373).



Figure 4.20: Female farm truck driver

4.3.1.3 Discussion

When comparing the two tables it is evident that there is a juxtaposition between the prescriptive literary content in School A, an Afrikaans school, and School B, an

isiXhosa school. Metcalfe (2015:152) defines this visual juxtaposition as a qualitative inquiry through contrast and I will be comparing the two tables using this visual juxtaposition. This inquiry created an opportunity to qualitatively analyse the tables through side-by-side comparison and highlighting the contrast between the two tables. Additionally, other factors taken into consideration for this juxtaposition were the illustrators and authors, the setting of the story, and the hidden message. By employing juxtaposition for this discussion, the objective was to provide an opportunity for an expanded understanding of the difference in the content of prescriptive literature in Grade 1 in the two respective schools.

As a point of departure, the authors and illustrators of the books played a critical role concerning the content, depictions, and settings in the books. The setting of the stories in *The Oxford Storieboom* reading series does not portray South Africa or Africa at large. The depictions in the series are characterized by Eurocentric or British elements because the author and illustrator are British. Even though the series was translated to Afrikaans and the names of characters were changed to Afrikaans names, Livingston (2018:9) alludes to the fact that changing the names of characters does not change a Eurocentric story into an African one. A critical review by Madolo (2017) reveals that this is extremely problematic because translating children's literature from languages with Eurocentric social constructs generates linguistic disadvantages, cultural biases, and a lack of social awareness (Madolo, 2017:358). Inversely, the prescriptive literature for School B, was written and illustrated by South Africans and therefore the context, content, setting, plot, and depictions are relevant and relatable to a South African frame of reference. This is important because indigenous knowledge systems need to be rescued from Eurocentric views, and therefore, according to Ndlovu (2014:85) the authors and illustrators are addressing the challenge of creating 'unique African humanness' in children's literature.

From the analysis, it is evident that books of Eurocentric descent, used in Afrikaans schools, portray more white characters as protagonists. Darker or black characters are secondary characters and in the majority of the books appear after the white characters. Prescriptive books from the isiXhosa schools mostly portray darker and black characters, and white characters are in the minority, which is a more accurate reflection of ethnic population groups in South Africa.

Tables 4.2 and 4.3 demonstrate that elements of Eurocentrism are encompassed in prescriptive books for Grade 1 in both schools. However, more books with Eurocentric concepts were from the Afrikaans school than the isiXhosa school. The prescriptive books from the Afrikaans school only demonstrated one potential element of South Africa, which is donkey rides. No indication is given whether the recreational activity is taking place in South Africa. From Table 4.2 it is apparent that there are more representations of South Africa and African elements in the books from the isiXhosa school than in the Afrikaans books. All the books from the isiXhosa school portrayed South African representation except for two books that were about animals, which were also translated into English fairytales.

I detected a hidden or unintended message in prescriptive books from both schools. However, the hidden message in the series of Afrikaans prescriptive books, of British origin, is derogatory and portrays a black male as angry, piteous, and sad, and an all-white football team. Paradoxically, the hidden message from the prescriptive books written in South Africa, for the South African schooling context, addresses the unequal power relation between males and females often demonstrated in children's literature. In this book, the hidden message is that the farming truck driver is female, which proves that strides have been made to address gender stereotyping in children's literature. Therefore, it is clear that prescriptive literature in Grade 1, and more particularly in the Afrikaans school, is entrenched with Eurocentric knowledge systems. Conversely, prescriptive literature that was authored in South Africa is more Afrocentric in nature and consequently more relevant, and also addresses stereotyping and unequal power relations.

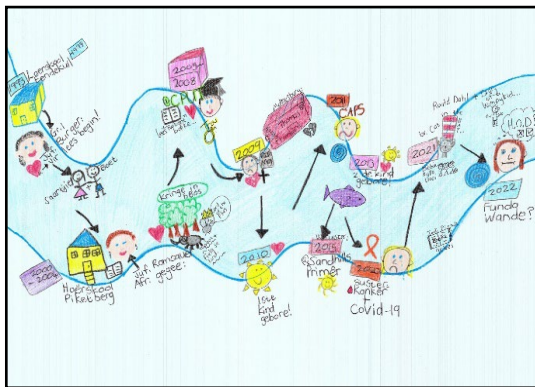
4.3.2 River of Life

During the River of Life data collection process participants were expected to sketch a timeline of visual drawings in the form of a river where the 'whole story' of their literacy journey could be seen. This was done to answer the research sub-question: *How do Grade 1 teachers' personal literacy journeys reflect the way that they teach children's literature?* This visual narrative provided an opportunity for aesthetic communication as well as descriptive illustrations. Data were collected during a 3-hour workshop to determine how their personal literacy journeys reflect the way that they teach children's

literature, their perspectives on the literary content that they are teaching, how they interpret and implement CAPS, and to establish the preparation or training they received to teach literature in Grade 1. Simultaneously, participants were encouraged to:

- indicate their knowledge and preference for children's literature
- indicate key influences on their journey
- their involvement in literacy activities
- access to literary resources
- challenges in their literacy journey

The following sketches are images of the River of Life activity (§3.5.2) created by the participants. Six information-rich key participants from three public schools in the Cape Wineland Education District participated in the River of Life activity (§3.4). Enlarged images of the River of Life sketches can be found at the end of the thesis (Appendix E).



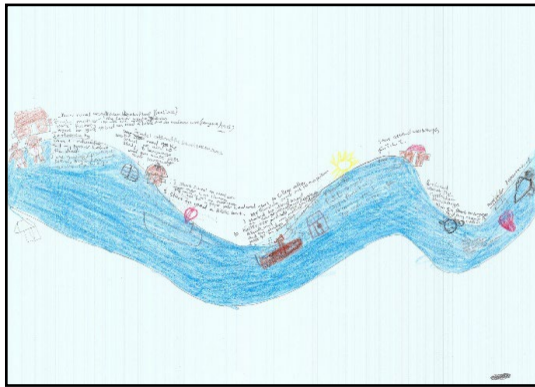


Figure 4.25: River of Life: P5

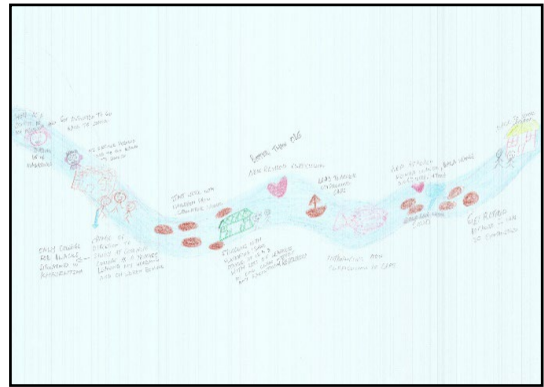


Figure 4.26: River of Life: P6

4.3.2.1 Educational background of teachers

The educational background of all teachers was evident in the sketches of their literacy journeys. For this section, I am outlining the formal educational background of Grade 1 teachers as the River of Life activity indicated. P1 sketched her educational journey by attending primary school, high school (Figure 4.27), and university, where she completed a B.Ed. degree. P2 outlined her river by indicating that she attended primary school, a high school for “coloured” learners only, under the apartheid regime, and later attended Söhnge College where she obtained a teaching qualification. P3,4,5,6 indicated many similarities in their educational upbringing. The visual narrative of P3 indicates that she had primary schooling in her hometown in the Western Cape but had to move to what she refers to as her “homeland in Transkei” to complete high school. According to the participant, this was due to the ongoing riots of 1976 (Figure 4.28) when protests began against the Apartheid government’s insistence that Afrikaans be used as the medium of instruction in schools in Soweto. The black stones are symbolic of rock-throwing in protests or riots. Upon returning to the Western Cape, she could only attend Good Hope College which was accessible for black people, as she was excluded from tertiary institutions based on race. She later obtained her diploma in teaching and started working. Subsequently, she enrolled at the University of the Western Cape where she obtained her degree in teaching. P4 sketches her primary school journey that started under a tree (Figure 4.29) in the Eastern Cape where they had no books. The tree, grass and rock in the thumbnail demonstrate her narrative. They mostly listened to the stories and news. According to the participant,

books, newspapers, and any form of literature they could find were borrowed from the people in the villages. She also affirmed that the 1976 riots largely affected her schooling career because they were scared and angry at the same time. “We wanted the same education as white South Africans”. For her, change came in 1992 when she obtained a teaching qualification that she later finished at UNISA, through the mode of distance learning. The narrative of P5 indicated that she started primary school, where she had to learn three languages, English, Afrikaans and isiXhosa. As an isiXhosa first language speaker and given the history that came with Afrikaans at the time, she felt that this was an unjust practice as they had to pass all their subjects to pass the year. She started college shortly after the late former president, Nelson Mandela, was released from prison. P6 completed her primary and high school in the pre-1994 era. Initially working as a dental assistant, she was motivated by her father to pursue a career in education. She did pursue formal schooling in the field of education but, according to her, under desolate conditions, as she had to leave her husband and children behind to attend Good Hope College in Khayelitsha, as this, according to the participant, was the only college that black people could attend at the time.

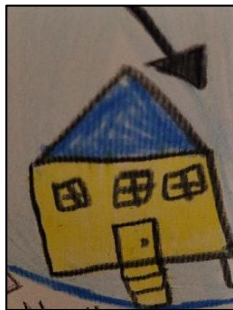


Figure 4.27: School

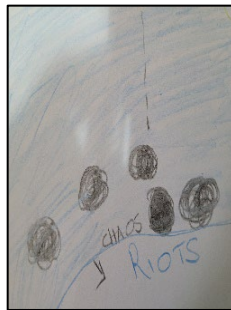


Figure 4.28: Stones



Figure 4.29: Trees and grass

4.3.2.2 The start of their literacy journey

The start of the participants' literacy journey varies but there is a commonality based on religion, the Bible. The visual narrative of P1 indicates that her literacy journey started with her Grade 1 teacher (Figure 4.30) as displayed in the thumbnail. The influence of the parents' and grandparents' reading habits is brought forward when P2 sketches the start of her journey. She had to listen to stories on the radio and Bible stories, read to her by her parents. Eventually, when she started reading, she liked to read under a tree in the backyard. P3 was also brought up with Bible stories but as a

child, she was often sent to the store to buy three magazines namely, Drum, Pace and Bona (Figure 4.31). According to the participant, this was momentous as families had to continuously be updated about the stories of Steve Biko, Nelson Mandela, and Chris Hani. This is apparent in her drawing. As a child, she expressed interest in the stories by looking at their pictures in the magazine and asking an adult to read her the story. The participant mentioned that this helped her to understand when “yellow mellow” (police vans) entered the township shooting teargas. The literacy journey of P4 started with storytelling under a tree as they did not have access to reading material. They listened to news stories whenever an adult could help them. P5 also portrays the Bible stories (Figure 4.32) as the start of her literacy journey. This points toward the majority of the participants’ literacy that started with the Bible. P6 did not indicate where her literacy journey started but her love for magazines is evident in the sketch.



Figure 4.30: Grade 1 teacher



Figure 4.31: Magazines



Figure 4.32: Bible

4.3.2.3 Library access in their childhood

Equitable access to library facilities varied. The thumbnail portrays a picture of a library building with a heart (Figure 4.33), demonstrating a love for libraries. P1 did not indicate library accessibility in the River of Life activity but did mention the names of the primary and secondary schools and both schools had library facilities. P2 indicated access to a library in high school as well as in college. P3, P4, P5, and P6 showed a similar trend in their narratives concerning library access. They all grew up in rural areas, in a segregationist climate. According to the participants, they, as black people, had limited or no access to library facilities. P4’s River of Life did however indicate that between 1992 and 1994 she did gain access to a library. This is where she was exposed to different books, poems, and genres.



Figure 4.33: Library

4.3.2.4 Reading preferences

Reading preferences that appeared in the River of Life activity were mainly books and the names of books. This is demonstrated by the thumbnail where the teacher participant is sitting with a reading book (Figure 4.34). P1 expressed her interest in novels such as *Twilight* and books by Jodi Picoult. At school, she liked her prescriptive literature books, namely, *Fiela se Kind* and *Kringe in 'n Bos*. Her sketch also shows her interest in *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* and *Cat in the Hat* by Ronald Dahl. According to the participant, the latter two books were books that she was reading with her children. The narrative of P2 indicated a lot of reading at home but no specific books were mentioned. P3 mentioned that during apartheid, she read any books she could find. Her River of Life displays the names of the following books: *The Moonstone*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Julius Ceaser*, *MacBeth*, *Mills and Boons*, and *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya* (Figure 4.35), which is an isiXhosa novel. She also expressed her fancy for the *Mysteries of Nancy Drew*. The journey of Nelson Mandela in the Apartheid years as well as the stories of Archbishop Desmond Tutu were expressed as reading preferences by P4 and P5, while P6 did not indicate a reading preference. However, P5 displayed a preference for reading the Bible and P6 displayed her love for reading magazines.



Figure 4.34: Books as reading preference



Figure 4.35: Names of books

4.3.2.5 Graded reading series

The River of Life activity of all participants disclosed that they regarded the graded reading series, that they were implementing in group guided reading sessions, as part of their literacy journey. P1 and P2 were teaching the Oxford Storieboom reading series of characters, Biebie, Kalla, Vlooi and Flappie (Figure 4.36). P3, P4, P5 and P6 recently started with a reading program called Funda Wandé (Figure 4.37). According to P1, she was recently informed by her subject advisor that she would need to implement Funda Wandé very soon. The whirlpool expressed her confusion and anxiety in having to switch to a new graded reading series.

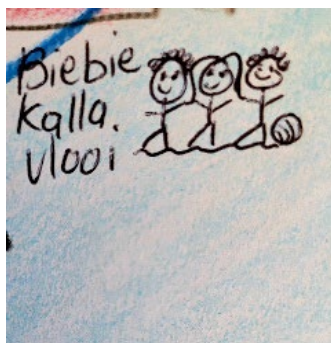


Figure 4.36: Oxford Storieboom



Figure 4.37: Confusion about Funda Wandé

4.3.2.6 Challenges

The River of Life displayed different challenges experienced by the teachers, as previously stated. P1 demonstrated that the passing of her sister due to cancer and the COVID-19 pandemic (Figure 4.38) was a very traumatic experience. According to the participant, this affected her literacy journey. The narrative of P2 displayed rocks with darker shades of blue (Figure 4.39), indicating the challenges and obstacles throughout her life. She did not specifically demonstrate the challenges in her sketch. P3 signified the 1976 riots that had a major impact on her education and literacy journey. According to the participants, they had limited or no access to literacy resources at the time. P4, who started her literacy journey under a tree, shared the same sentiment in her River of Life narrative. P5 started her education and literacy journey in a church, which, according to the participant, was a challenge. Additionally, curriculum changes were identified as an obstacle. The participant mentioned that whenever she understood and got used to a curriculum, it changed again. P6 indicated

a few challenges in her literacy journey. Leaving her husband and children behind to study education was her first challenge. She later worked with children in squatter camps trying to teach them to read. This was difficult as they never had sufficient resources to teach them to read. The participant identified platooning as a big challenge. They were teaching two groups of children until 5 pm with no facilities and resources which was strenuous. Following several curriculum changes and the COVID-19 pandemic (Figure 4.40), the participant felt drained and overworked. According to the participant, this affected her literacy journey as she did not read for her pleasure as there was simply no time.



Figure 4.38: Sister's passing



Figure 4.39: Fish



Figure 4.40: Stones in river

4.3.2.7 CAPS

The CAPS document was depicted with an unhappy face and a whirlpool below the sad face (Figure 4.41). The unhappy face indicated the participants' unhappiness with the current curriculum. The participants expressed their despondency toward the curriculum. Just like a rotating mass of water in a river, the whirlpool demonstrated how the Grade 1 teachers continuously struggled to keep their heads above water while implementing the CAPS curriculum. P3 indicated that OBE and RNCS followed by CAPS was an immeasurable amount of policy reading and that she stopped reading books for pleasure. P4, P5 and P6 indicated that the continuous curriculum changes which led to a comprehensive curriculum policy document were confusing and had a great deal of new information to absorb. The fish with sharp teeth (Figure 4.42) demonstrated the government that implemented the CAPS curriculum. P6 did, however, indicate that the CAPS document was an improvement of OBE and the RNCS policy documents. This participant also went on an early retirement due to exhaustion caused by having to implement a rigid CAPS curriculum during the COVID-19 pandemic. Interestingly, this teacher was a lead teacher when training and

unpacking of the CAPS document commenced. She is now teaching in a SGB position for the year, teaching and assisting with academic recovery in Grade 1.



Figure 4.41: Unhappy face

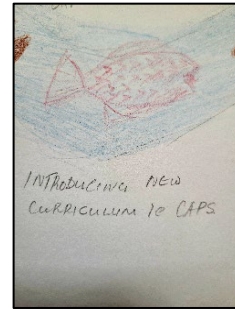


Figure 4.42: Fish with sharp teeth

4.3.2.8 The fish: moving along

Just like a shoal of fish swimming in a river, teachers from different spheres of life, different educational backgrounds, skill sets and experiences, need to swim alongside colleagues to operate more efficiently and effectively. All six participants' narratives displayed the fish in the river (Figure 4.43) that symbolized the teacher's responsibility to swim and keep moving irrespective of the differences, challenges, and disagreements with viewpoints of the curriculum, graded reading series and continuous policy changes. The darker blue section in the river is symbolic of the waves, currents and tides teachers experienced while trying to deliver the curriculum to the best of their ability.

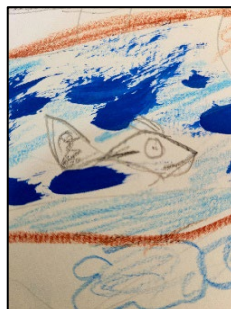


Figure 4.43: Fish in the river

4.3.2.9 Discussion

The majority of the participants, whose ethnicity was coloured and black, indicated that their literacy journey commenced under very hostile conditions during the Apartheid era and amid the 1976 Soweto uprising. P4 stated that they only wanted the same education as white South Africans. The commonality between the start of these participants' literacy journey was that they grew up reading Bible stories as literary content. P3 sketched that her literacy journey continued through browsing through magazines with stories of Nelson Mandela, Steve Biko, and Chris Hani. For them, it was critical to stay updated with the news of the three stalwarts. During the discussion of the drawings, the participant mentioned that this helped her to understand her current surroundings, e.g., when police vans entered the townships shooting teargas. She stated that she read what was relevant at the time, to expand her understanding of her current circumstances. During the discussion, participants agreed that it was important for children to read stories relevant to their current situation and within their frame of reference because it helped them to understand what was going on in their lives. Therefore, Sharp, Diego-Medrano and Coneway (2018:1) argue that Foundation Phase teachers must develop knowledge and understanding related to children's literature. Taking the childhood milieu of the five teachers into consideration, it becomes questionable whether these teachers were familiar with a wide enough range of literary works for children, and additionally, prescriptive books provided by the Department of Basic Education, to plan richly integrated literacy work.

Participants indicated that they had read books from adult genres and sketched the graded reading series of their respective schools as part of their literacy journey. They could not refer to favourite children's books they had read in their literacy journey or particular children's authors that they were inclined to, indicating a reliance on the graded reading series as knowledge of children's literature. Botirova (2022:75,76) avers that teachers must be experts who determine the literary content and can select and manage the required materials for the literacy lesson. This is critical to prevent or mitigate an overdependence on the Eurocentric prescriptive literature in Grade 1. According to Venketsamy and Sibanda (2021:263), this is a result of teachers having no latitude to choose prescriptive books for their classes because they are being restricted by using text and resources provided by the department. This is problematic

because, according to Cremin *et al.*, (2008:458), the lack of knowledge concerning children's literature holds extensive consequences for learners from linguistic and cultural minority groups who will continue to be marginalised unless the teachers' reading repertoires expand.

Drawings from participants mostly indicated that they had read books of Eurocentric descent. Only two participants indicated that they had read books written by South African authors, namely, *Kringe in 'n Bos* and *Fiel se kind*, two Afrikaans fiction novels, and *Ingqumbo Yeminyanya*, an isiXhosa novel. One participant made mention of South African magazines, namely, *Drum*, *Pace* and *Bona*, and another participant liked to read about the journeys of the late former President Nelson Mandela and Archbishop Desmond Tutu. The majority of the participants did not have access to a library while growing up because they grew up in rural areas in a segregationist climate during Apartheid. One participant had access to a library in high school, and the other throughout her life. Given the limited access to library and literary resources and the Eurocentric influence transmitted through adult literature over the years, it becomes debatable whether the teachers would be able to make knowledgeable book recommendations for Grade 1 learners with different interests and needs. Furthermore, would be able to identify suitable stories for their learners that represent South Africa and their surroundings?

Participants sketched major challenges in their literacy journey, the Soweto Uprising of 1976 during the Apartheid era, the curriculum change to CAPS, and the COVID-19 pandemic. Firstly, the political situation under the Apartheid regime was a major challenge for the majority of the participants, specifically the 1976 riots and the subsequent civil and political unrest that snowballed from these riots. These challenges impacted participants' education as well as their literacy journey because they had limited access to literary resources and in some instances none. Secondly, participants identified the continuous curriculum changes and CAPS as obstacles. CAPS was depicted with sketches of despondency by all the participants. A whirlpool in the river demonstrated the participant's struggle and challenges with CAPS. According to the participants, it was too much policy reading and the rigid curriculum did not allow much time for policy reading. The moving fish indicated that they were moving along with the challenges, disagreements, and viewpoints that they had of the CAPS curriculum

because they could not change it. According to the participants, the COVID-19 pandemic caused some curriculum adjustments and more work. They felt exasperated, overworked, and exhausted. The latter had an immense effect on their literacy journey because they no longer read for pleasure.

In conclusion, participants reflected and sketched how their literacy journey and experiences were shaped within a political, social, and economic context. This is critical as teachers should be able to identify, select and teach culturally relevant text that can develop sociocultural consciousness in learners (Christ & Sharma, 2018:57). The visual narratives provided by the participants through a River of Life workshop activity responded to the research sub-question: *How do Grade 1 teachers' personal literacy journeys reflect the way that they teach children's literature?*

4.3.3 Interview and focus group analysis

Data were collected through a semi-structured interview (§3.5.3) and a focus group (§3.5.4) to answer the following research questions: *What are the teachers' perspectives on the factors that influence how they teach literature in Grade 1? What preparation or training did they receive to teach Grade 1 literature? How do Grade 1 teachers interpret CAPS and implement this in their teaching? What are the challenges experienced by teachers in teaching prescriptive literature in Grade 1?*

I conducted a semi-structured interview (§3.5.3) with one Afrikaans participant and a focus group (§3.5.4) with four isiXhosa-speaking teachers in English. The reason for this approach was that the Afrikaans teacher chose to do the semi-structured interview in Afrikaans, hence, I interviewed her separately. The same set of questions was used for both data collection methods. The rationale for this approach is given in Chapter 3, Section 3.5. However, both methods lend themselves to free-flowing discussions which resulted in a slight variation of the themes that transpired.

4.3.3.1 Interview analysis

To be able to establish the teacher's perspective on factors that influence how she teaches prescriptive literature, it was paramount to first gain an understanding of her

background which briefly included her literacy journey, current access to children's literature, reading habits and preferences, her training and leeway that she was given by the school and the Department of Basic Education to choose prescriptive literature for her class. A study by Christ and Sharma (2018:57) asserts that reflections, with a focus on professional development, can assist teachers in selecting culturally relevant text and in addition develop socio-cultural consciousness. Phenomena that were subsequently scrutinized through this qualitative analysis were factors such as the curriculum and challenges that seem to hinder a socially just educational world.

4.3.3.1.1 Exposure to children's literature as a child

The teacher was thoroughly exposed to children's literature from a very young age in her parental home where they read continually. Coming from a moderately privileged background she alluded that she had access to a library where she could borrow books from her earliest school year, and she joined a book club. Occasionally, her mom also borrowed books from the library for them to read. She had role models such as her parents and her Grade 1 teacher who played a role in her literacy development from a very young age. This can be seen in the following quotes:

- [0:00:19-01:05] L11-12 "ek is darem by die huis aan boeke blootgestel" - *I was exposed to books at home.*
- [0:00:19-01:05] L17-19 "ons het die heeltid gelees in die huis en toe ek nou Graad 1 kom, het ek 'n goeie Afrikaanse Graad 1 juffrou gehad, wat ook vir my lief gemaak het vir lees" - *In our house, we read all the time. When I got to Grade 1, I had a good teacher that instilled a love for reading.*
- [0:00:19-01:05] L14 "hulle het vir ons kinders van kleins af aan boeke blootgestel" - *They exposed us to books from a very young age.*
- [0:00:19-01:05] L15 "ek het aan 'n klub aangesluit toe ek nog 'n kind was" - *I joined a club when I was still a child.*
- [0:00:19-01:05] L21-22 "die eerste keer toe ek by 'n biblioteek inkom in Graad 1, die skole het darem 'n klein bibliotekie gehad..." - *When I went to school for the first time in Grade 1, the school had a small library.*

Therefore, it can be seen that this participant developed a love for reading because of her Grade 1 teacher and she was exposed to reading at home and the library. Furthermore, since she attended an Ex-Model C school throughout her schooling career, she had access to clubs and literacy resources from her first school year. An

ex-Model C school refers to a school that was historically for white learners only (Athiemoolam & Vermaak, 2021:39).

4.3.3.1.2 Access to children's literature

The participant noted that as a teacher, her access to children's literature was unrestricted as eBooks were generally available online and libraries were accessible overall. Moreover, she liked to buy books from a bookstore or a marketplace.

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| [0:04:10-14] L95-96 | "eBooks en jy kan by die biblioteek mos nou enigiets uitneem..."
- <i>eBooks and you can take out anything from the library.</i> |
| [0:04:14-28] L98 | "en by die boekwinkel gaan koop" - <i>and you can buy from the bookstore.</i> |
| [0:04:14-28] L99-100 | "tweedehandse winkels en soos by 'n bazaar of 'n mark" - <i>second hand shops like a bazaar or a market.</i> |

As the participant mentioned different locations where children's literature was available, it became evident that the participant did not foresee any limitations or challenges in accessing different types or genres of children's literature.

4.3.3.1.3 Personal reading habits of the teacher

A question was posed regarding the reading habits of the teacher. The quotes which follow indicate the participant's perspective on her reading habits.

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| [0:01:07-19] L26-27 | "As ek die kans kry, lees ek nou maar nie altyd nie." - <i>If I get a chance, then I will read but not always.</i> |
| [0:05:14-25] L115-117 | "ek lees, vakansietyd, sal ek nou meer lees as deur die kwartaal. As ek nou rustig raak en ek het nie nou ander aktiwiteite, wat skool administrasie betref, of my eie kinders se werk nie..." - <i>I will read in the holidays, I also read more in the holidays than during the term. When I'm not that busy and don't have other activities like school administration or my own children's work.</i> |

At multiple times, the participant indicated that she did not have a lot of time to read. She disclosed that she needed to read more but was limited by time due to administrative work at school and the work of her own children. She read during the holidays when she was a bit more relaxed and had extra time to read.

4.3.3.1.4 Participation in literacy projects

On the subject of participation in literacy projects, the participant was requested to state her involvement in literacy projects at or outside of the school.

[0:03:44-54] L81-82 “Nee, nie waar ek al skool gegee het nie, ek het nog nie in geletterdheidsprojekte deelgeneem nie, behalwe nou boeke week” - *No, not where I have taught. I have not participated in literacy projects except book week.*

The participant revealed that she was not involved in literacy projects other than Book Week, which is once a year at her school. It also became apparent that the school only hosted one literacy project per year which is Book Week.

4.3.3.1.5 Personal reading preference

The participant was asked to state her reading preference and the following was quoted:

[0:04:35-54] L104-106 “misdaad, speur, geniet speur verhale uhm, uh spanning, suspense ... Ek is nie ‘n romance tipe persoon nie.” - *Crime, detective, I enjoy detective stories uhm, suspense...I am not a romance type of person.*

The participant's personal preference leaned more toward adult genres such as thrillers, suspense, crime, and criminal investigations.

4.3.3.1.6 Teacher's personal experience with prescriptive literature

The question on the participant's experience regarding prescriptive literature was posed to establish her understanding and exposure to prescriptive literature in her schooling career.

[0:05:53-6:17] L132-133 “het ek ook gehou van die voorsgekrewe boeke.” - *I liked prescriptive books.*

[0:06:23-27] L137-138 “Ja, ons almal het ‘n boek gehad op skool. Elkeen het sy eie boek gehad.” - *Yes, we all had a book at school. Everyone had their own book.*

In her pleasant experience with prescriptive literature in school, each child in their class had their own reading book. It was evident that limited resources regarding prescriptive literature was an unaccustomed concept to her.

4.3.3.1.7 Training to teach prescriptive literature

To answer one of the research sub-questions, *What preparation or training did they receive to teach Grade 1 literature?* the participant answered through the following quotes:

- [0:06:40-49] L145-147 “ Ja, ons het mos op Wellington CPUT lank gelede, het ons Geletterdheid in die Grondslagfase gehad. Graad 1, 2,3, ja van Graad R af ja.” - *Yes, long ago, at CPUT Wellington we did ‘Geletterdheid in die Grondslagfase. Grade, 1,2,3, yes from Grade R.*
- [0:07:06-12] L158-159 “Ons het mos nog die HNKV gehad, voor CAPS, het mos eers 2011 gekom en ek was al toe klaar gestudeer...” - *We had the RNCS before CAPS. CAPS only came in 2011 and at that time I already finished my studies.*
- [0:07:51-08:04] L173-175 “ek kan rêrig nie nou onthou nie...kort kursusse of soos meer werkswinkels gehad...” - *I really cannot remember, we had shorter courses or more like workshops.*

Therefore, it can be said that training in teaching prescriptive literature was mainly acquired from her undergraduate studies at CPUT Wellington Campus, where at the time, students were trained for the RNCS curriculum. When CAPS was implemented, she was already done with her studies. She could not recall any additional training to teach prescriptive literature except for some workshops that were presented by office-based staff from the Western Cape Education Department.

4.3.3.1.8 Teacher's latitude in choosing prescriptive literature

According to Botirova (2022:75-76), teachers must be experts who determine the literary content and can select and manage the required materials for the literacy lesson (§2.4). For this reason, the participant was asked to elaborate on her involvement in choosing prescriptive books for her class. The participant quoted the following:

[0:17:45-18:31] L383-385 “ek het nie rêrig ‘n sê seker in die boeke wat aangekoop word, ek weet nie. Ek was nog nooit by die aankope van boeke gewees by ‘n skool nie.” - *I don't really have a say in the books that are purchased for the school, I don't know. I've never been involved in purchasing books for the school.*

[0:17:45-18:31] L379-380 “my vak adviseur het gesê” - *my subject advisor said so.*

The participant stated that she had no latitude when it came to choosing prescriptive literature for her class. She had never been involved in any purchases of books for the school and stated that the school placed the orders. She had no say in the decision about the choice of books nor had she been consulted about it. Concerning teaching prescriptive literature, she carried out the instructions given to her by the subject advisor. This centralised system is highly criticized by scholars (§2.3.10).

4.3.3.1.9 CAPS

The research sub-question, *How do Grade 1 teachers interpret CAPS and implement this in their teaching?* was asked to establish the participant's viewpoint regarding her interpretation, understanding and implementation of the policy document. The participant stated the following:

[0:08:35-37] L189 “Ons het nie eintlik ‘n keuse seker nie” - *We don't actually have a choice.*

[0:08:38-54] L191-192 “ek het maar met die HNKV begin skool gee en toe het ek oorgegaan na CAPS” - *I started teaching with HNKV and then had to switch to CAPS.*

[0:08:58-09:00] L199 “Ek moet maar go with the flow” - *I have to go with the flow.*

[0:09:15-59] L202-203 “Sommige dae voel dit vir my, dit is nie haalbaar nie” - *Some days it feels like the aims/goals are out of reach.*

- [0:10:06-10] L220-221 “jy moet maar ook na die kind se vlak toe dit aanpas” - *You need to adjust to the level that the child is on.*
- [0:11:33-34] L249 “Partykeer gaan maar moeilik” - *Sometimes it is really difficult.*
- [0:20:41-46] L435-436 “Die kurrikulum bly verander” - *The curriculum constantly changes.*
- [0:10:15-27] L224-225 “werkswinkels en ons vakadviseurs, wat ons help” - *workshops and subject advisors help us.*

From the participants' responses, it was evident that the implementation of the policy document was a challenge even though guidance was provided through workshops and support was given by subject advisors. Left with no choice but to follow convention and teach in accordance with the policy statement, the participant mentioned that she often needed to adjust her teaching methodology to balance it with the developmental level of the child. She expressed her despondency by saying that it was really difficult at times to teach the curriculum and that attaining objectives seemed far out of reach.

The participant reiterated that she was trained for the RNCS curriculum but had to switch to the CAPS curriculum in 2011. According to the participant, continuous curriculum changes required teachers to stay updated with the latest policy statement and this was often a laborious exercise.

I prompted a more elaborate response by asking her what her perspective was on whether the CAPS curriculum was providing all children with equal opportunities to learn. She responded as follows:

- [0:11:46-12:09] L252 “Nee, nie rêrig” - *No, not really.*
- [0:14:37-48] L303-304 “almal in die land moet nou CAPS doen, maar hulle dink nie aan, aan die omstandighede van die kinders nie” - *Everybody in the country must do CAPS but they do not think of the circumstances of the children.*

According to the participant, the CAPS curriculum did not provide all children with equal opportunities to learn in a socially just educational world. This is because the implementation of CAPS is an umbrella approach where all children need to do the same work, but the circumstances and disadvantages for the children were not considered.

4.3.3.1.10 Resources

A lack of adequate resources in the majority of schools in South Africa, that are culturally and socially inclusive, is hindering the successful implementation of the CAPS curriculum (§2.2). Guided by Rawls's theory of Social Justice, it was paramount to determine whether literary resources were distributed in a way that provided all children in Grade 1 with an equal opportunity to become readers who could resonate with the text. For this reason, the participant's perspective on the latter was asked to establish whether her Grade 1 class had sufficient resources to implement the curriculum and teach prescriptive literature successfully. She responded with the following quotes:

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| [0:18:44-59] L395-396 | "Daar's baie ou boekies wat, amper sê ek al so verniel is en dis al ou geskrifte..." - <i>There is a lot of old and damaged books.</i> |
| [0:19:00-09] L398-399 | "ek het ook maar boekies van my kinders se ou boekies ook maar skool toe gebring om bietjie nuwe leesstof" - <i>I brought some older books of my children to school as new reading material.</i> |
| [0:19:14-28] L409 | "ja hierdie jaar sukkel ek baie met lees, omdat ek nie 'n mat het nie" - <i>This year I am struggling a lot with reading because I do not have a carpet.</i> |
| [0:21:02-45] L444 | "daar moet hulle twee-twee sit om te lees" - <i>Two learners need to sit together to read.</i> |
| [0:21:02-45] L445 | 'omdat ek nou so 'n groot klas het, kan ek nie vir elkeen 'n boekie afdruk nie." - <i>Because I have such a big class, I cannot copy a book for each learner.</i> |
| [0:38:48-39:02] L816-817 | "daar's vyf kinders in my klas op die oomblik wat pritt hê, dit gaan moeilik" - <i>Currently, there are five children in my class that do have pritt, it is very challenging.</i> |
| [0:13:43-14:07] L288 | "Almal het toegang tot die biblioteek" - <i>Everybody have access to the library.</i> |

According to the participant basic resources that were needed to teach prescriptive literature and implement the curriculum, such as adequate books and a carpet for the children to sit on when teaching them how to read, were lacking in her classroom. Moreover, books were outdated and damaged. In addition, learners needed to sit together in pairs to read from one book. Due to the large number of learners in her class, she could not provide all learners with a copy of the book. The lack of resources for school induced new challenges like theft. The participant stated that, as a result of inadequate literary resources, she was using her own children's used books to add

variety to the books that she had in class. She added that all children did have access to resources like the library but as previously stated they did not utilize the services provided by the library.

4.3.3.1.11 Socio-economic circumstances of learners

The concept of Social Justice, which served as the theoretical framework for this research study, demands equal rights and opportunities for all persons; from the poorest margin of society to the wealthiest (§2.6.1). Therefore, the socio-economic circumstances of learners cannot be isolated from factors that could influence curriculum implementation and factors that influence teaching prescriptive literature in Grade 1. The participant was asked to elaborate on the socio-economic circumstances of learners, and she quoted:

- [0:12:21-46] L261-262 “die meeste is maar van swak omstandighede” - *the most are from poor circumstances.*
- [0:30:11-22] L632 “Hulle kom mos nou van plaas en plakkerskampe af.” - *They come from the farms and the squatter camps.*
- [0:38:21-40] L804-808 “ons het ‘n arm gemeenskap en baie, die helfte van my kinders kom sê van plase af. Sekere tyd van jaar is daar nie werk nie en dan is daar nie geld is nie, mens kan dit sien, dit trek swaar in die klas, nie net wat kos betref nie maar, die ouers koop nie meer skryfbehoeftes ook nie.” - *We have a poor community and a lot, almost half of my children come from farms. At a certain time of the year, there is no work meaning there is no money. It becomes evident in the class; it becomes challenging in the classroom. Not only with regards to food but parents also do not buy stationery.*
- [0:39:13-17] L823-824 “Dan vra hulle vir hulle almal moet hulle hand opsteek wat SASSA geld kry en dan steek almal hulle hand op...” - *When you ask them, who receives a SASSA grant, everybody raises their hands.*

The participant articulated that most learners in her class descended from very poor socio-economic circumstances that directly influenced their education. Most resided in squatter camps or farms and formed part of low-income households. Seasonal jobs on farms resulted in parents being unemployed at certain times of the year. This was detrimental to the extent that children did not only come to school without food but also stationery and a backpack. Furthermore, parents did not want to buy school necessities even though the children received a government grant from SASSA. Most children also

did not attend the library even though it was at their disposal. According to the teacher, these were circumstances that were not taken into consideration when they were expected to deliver the curriculum effectively. Basic resources such as magazines and newspapers that were needed to finish the curriculum could not be acquired from these low-income households. Therefore, the participant reiterated that the circumstances of the child played an immense role in their education.

4.3.3.1.12 Parental involvement

Since parental involvement is critical for a child's academic achievement (Roy & Giraldo-Garcia, 2018:33), the participant was asked to elaborate on the extent of parental involvement for her Grade 1 class. This was asked to establish whether poor socio-economic circumstances, which are a result of past social injustices, affected the involvement of parents. As low parental involvement can ultimately become a challenge for the teacher, this was linked to the research sub-question: *What are the challenges experienced by teachers in teaching prescriptive literature?* The participants responded as follows:

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| [0:37:52-38:15] L798-799 | "daai gemeenskap, baie min, dat hulle kinders aan die hand vat en met hulle huiswerk doen of enige stimulasie."
- <i>In that community it is only a few that will guide the children with homework or give any stimulation.</i> |
| [0:16:36-56] L348-349 | "dis sleg as die ouers die kinders nie skool toe bring nie."
- <i>It's bad if the parents don't bring the children to school.</i> |
| [0:25:23-33] L528-529 | "ek kry nie ondersteuning van die huis af, van die ouers nie, hulle kom nie eers almal oueraand toe nie" - <i>I don't get support from home, from the parents. They don't even come to the parent meetings.</i> |
| [0:26:17-26] L550-551 | "baie van die ouers werk tot laat en daai kinders gaan liewer speel buite" - <i>A lot of the parents work till late and the children will rather play outside.</i> |
| [0:37:16-34] L782 | "daar's ook glad nie belangstelling en nie deur die jaar nie"
- <i>Throughout the year they show no interest.</i> |

According to the participant parental involvement was at its lowest level. She mentioned different examples to demonstrate uninterested parents' behavioural patterns and further expressed her thoughts by saying that she was of the view that the parents were most likely illiterate. Unfortunately, no workbooks could be sent home

because parents did not see to it that it was returned to school and neither had the money to replace them. She distressingly mentioned that she did not receive much support from parents throughout the year, and the majority did not attend parent-teacher meetings. Some parents sent family members to attend because they needed to work later hours on the farms. Most parents were uninvolved and did not provide support with homework nor provide any educational stimulation at home. As a result, the participant stated that, if the parent was not interested in reading, or was not motivating the child, they were not going to go to the library on their own.

4.3.3.1.13 Children's attitudes towards prescriptive literature

Prescriptive children's literature should include cultural information that the child can relate to their own experiences, interests, and backgrounds. Additionally, it must provide a pleasurable reading experience for learners to become lifelong readers (Chapter 2). Failure to provide the aforesaid has the potential to affect readers' attitudes to the information they are presented with. Accordingly, the children's attitude towards prescriptive literature cannot be isolated when investigating factors that influence how teachers teach prescriptive literature. The participant elaborated with the following quotes:

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| [0:25:33-26:03] L535-536 | "maar hulle stel nie belang in daai leeskaarte gaan lees by die huis nie." - <i>They have no interest in reading their reading charts at home.</i> |
| [0:25:33-26:03] L537-539 | "hulle worry dan self nie, hulle gooi net weg of verniel dit of teken daarop of vou 'n jet en gooi hom." - <i>They don't worry about themselves. They lose it or damage it or draw on it or they make a jet and through it.</i> |
| [0:21:56-22:47] L461-464 | "Ons kan nie eintlik boeke huistoe stuur nie want die kinders pas nie jou goed op nie. Dit word of weggegooi, of dit word verbrand, of dit word geskeur, of hulle mors dit nat, of hulle sê die hond het dit gebyt, of my boetie het daarin geteken" - <i>We cannot send books home because the children don't look after it. They throw it away, burn it, tear it up, allow it to get wet or they say the dog bit it or their siblings drew in it.</i> |
| [0:22:48-23:06] L476-478 | "hulle nie daai trots en op hulle skool werk en dis skoolgoed wat hulle nie terugbring skool toe nie" - <i>They do not take pride in their schoolwork, and they don't bring the stuff back to school.</i> |

According to the participant the learners had a nonchalant attitude towards their prescriptive literature and reading resources. She mentioned that they could not send materials home because it was most likely to be damaged and not returned to the school. Furthermore, learners were dispassionate about their reading materials and were often not disciplined at home which became evident in the classroom. A lack of pride and enthusiasm toward their schoolwork was noticeable.

4.3.3.1.14 Children's literature that reflects the child's lived experiences

The principle of Social Justice, as per Rawls's *A Theory of Justice*, speaks of the principle of equal opportunity (§2.6.4.1). To investigate the perspectives of the teachers on whether children's literature in Grade 1 perpetuated a Westernized culture and whether equal opportunities were given to the learners to associate themselves with the prescriptive literature, a question about whether the prescriptive literature reflects the child's lived experiences was posed. The participant quoted the following:

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| [0:30:51-55] L647-648 | "Nee, nee, nee onmiddellike verwysingsrame het nie, waar hulle nou aan gewoond is nie." - <i>No, no, no not their immediate frame of reference, that they are currently used to.</i> |
| [0:30:30-38] L638-639 | "hulle praat nie eintlik van huise en karre en, dis maar net kinders wat op avonture gaan" - <i>They don't actually talk about houses or cars, it is mostly children that go on adventures.</i> |
| [0:31:50-32:15] L670-671 | "hulle wys nie waar hulle bly en hulle agtergrond nie" - <i>They don't show where they stay, and their background.</i> |
| [0:34:29-37] L721-722 | "daar is hier en daar 'n boekie wat met Suid Afrika te doen het" - <i>There's a book here and there that's got to do with South Africa.</i> |
| [0:30:01-11] L626-627 | "nadelig wees, as hulle nou nie van hulle eie agtergrond of hulle lewenservaring in die stories leer" - <i>It can be a disadvantage to the children if they don't learn about or relate to their backgrounds or life experiences in the stories.</i> |

According to the participant, prescriptive children's literature in the classroom did not reflect the immediate frame of reference of the learners. The storylines were mostly about children going on adventures. The books also did not portray where the children stayed or their backgrounds. Furthermore, she only had a few books that portrayed South Africa. Therefore, according to the participant, failure to learn or read about their

backgrounds and experiences in prescriptive literature could put the child at a disadvantage and could be detrimental to their development.

4.3.3.1.15 Diversity in prescriptive children's literature

The following sub-question: *What are the teachers' perspectives on the content of the prescribed literature?* is interlinked with the qualitative content analysis. The participant was asked to elaborate on her perspective of the diversity in prescriptive literature in her Grade 1 class. This question was also posed to establish whether the participant understood the Western epistemological influence in prescriptive children's literature and the importance of South African representation in the prescriptive books.

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| [0:23:49-58] L495-496 | "dit is immers mos, ek sien die oorsese storie wat hulle net vertaal het..." - <i>It is actually stories from overseas that they translated.</i> |
| [0:24:03-16] L501-503 | "Engels wat hulle in Afrikaans gemaak het vir Suid Afrika en ja, dit is nie eintlik op alle kulture en agtergronde en omstandighede uhm van toepassing nie." - <i>It is English stories that they translated to Afrikaans for South Africa. Yes, it is not actually relevant to all cultures, backgrounds and circumstances.</i> |
| [0:31:17-34] L659-661 | "ek dink is Fatiema, hy's nou meer Muslim, dis darem nie almal nie net wit kindertjies nie." - <i>I think Fatiema is Muslim, it's not only white children.</i> |

According to the participant, the books used to teach prescriptive literature in Grade 1 were English stories from overseas that were translated into Afrikaans for the South African school context. She stated that these stories were not necessarily relevant to the learners' culture, background, or circumstances. However, different races were depicted in the story, and she mentioned a depiction of a Muslim character, Fatiema, in one of the prescriptive stories. Therefore, it can be said that Western epistemologies and Eurocentric depictions enjoyed carte blanche in the prescriptive literature in her classroom (§2.6.3).

4.3.3.1.16 Prescriptive children's literature and transformation

Addressing past injustices and transforming prescriptive literature so that children read literature they can associate with, will be mandatory to achieve living in an equal and

just society (§2.6.1). A question was asked on whether the participant had seen efforts of transformation in prescriptive children's literature in Grade 1. The participant stated:

- [0:34:48-49] L733 "Dis in die minderheid." - *It is in the minority.*
- [0:33:21-34:03] L704-705 "'n storie van die babatjie wat gebore is in Suid Afrika en die ouma, die ouma bly in Holland" - *It's a story about a baby that was born in South Africa and the grandma and grandpa stays in Holland.*
- [0:33:21-34:03] L708-709 "'n boekie wat julle van hou van Jamilla se rok in my klas, ek hou nou van die rok, maar dis nou 'n tradisionele Afrika storie" - *There's a book in my class that they like, "Jamilla se rok" it's a traditional African story.*
- [0:34:04-21] L716-718 "daar's hier en daar Afrika stories in, in my boekrakkie, maar dit het niks met hulle lees uhm, die leesreeks te doen nie wat hulle uit lees maar net 'n voorlees." - *There's here-and-there a story about Africa on my book shelf but it's got nothing to do with their prescriptive reading series, it is just reading for enjoyment.*

The participant stated that transformation in prescriptive children's literature was being addressed in the minority. When asking the participant if she had come across any children's literacy that depicted topics like democracy, politics, or apartheid, she answered "no". She mentioned two books that she had in her classroom about a traditional African story, that the learners liked, and another about a baby that was born in South Africa, but his/her grandparents were from Holland. Therefore, it can be said that efforts to address transformation and past injustices through prescriptive children's literature in Grade 1 were in the minority.

4.3.3.1.17 Overcrowded classroom

West and Meier (2020:2) describe overcrowded classrooms as the "Achilles heel in South African education." In response to the research sub-question: *What are the challenges experienced by teachers in teaching prescriptive literature?* the participant mentioned that she had 48 learners in her class and that the classroom was filled to capacity, to the extent that movement was limited. She initially had 50 learners of which two moved to a different school in the area.

- [0:19:35-49] L416-418 "my klas is letterlik vol. Daar's nie plek om te loop amper in die klas nie. Daar was 50 in die begin van die jaar, 2 is darem weg."

- *My class is literally full. There is no place to walk. At the beginning of the year, they were 50, with at least 2 who left.*

[0:25:07-22] L524 “daar’s 10 uit my 48 kinders wat nou lees” - *There is 10 out of my 48 kids who can read now.*

According to the participant, an overcrowded classroom posed a disadvantage to the children in her class, and it was evident since only 10 out of 48 children could read at the time of the interview.

4.3.3.1.18 Factors that influence the teacher’s prescriptive literature lessons pedagogy

Rawls’s *A Theory of Justice* is underpinned by the principle of social and economic inequalities; hence the participant was encouraged throughout to state factors that influenced how she delivered the curriculum and affected how she taught prescriptive literature. This was done to interpret and understand responses that could answer the main research question which was: *What are the teachers’ perspectives of the factors that influence how they teach literature in Grade 1?* The participant responded with the following quotes:

[0:35:14-36:15] L747-749 “mens kan nie klaslees onderrig sonder ‘n mat nie, want jy moet daai one-to-one aandag in die klas kan gee op die mat.” - *You cannot teach reading without a carpet because you need to give one-on-one attention on the carpet.*

[0:36:22-38] L763 “Die klassikaal werk nie vir lees nie” - *An approach where the whole class reads altogether is not working.*

[0:35:14-36:15] L756 “as my klas nou groot genoeg was...” - *only if my class was big enough.*

[0:35:14-36:15] L754-755 “op die oomblik is daar ook nie juis genoeg boekies” - *At this moment there are not enough books.*

[0:36:15-22] L758-759 “die boekies, is ‘n bietjie oud” - *the books are outdated.*

[0:40:54-41:08] L860-861 “‘n kind wie se ouers nie hou van lees nie en wat nie self lees nie, gaan ook nie hou van lees nie” - *A child whose parents do not like to read and also do not read, will also not like to read.*

[0:28:23-37] L595-596 “kinders hou van ‘n prentjie wat hulle aandag mos nou trek, ‘n kleur prent.” - *Children like pictures that draw their attention, colour pictures.*

[0:28:45-50] L606-607 “as daar woorde of iets is wat moeilik is om te verduidelik, ja, die prente help.” - *If there are words that are difficult to explain, the pictures help.*

The participant stated that she could not teach prescriptive reading without adequate resources like a carpet, a big enough classroom with reasonable space for movement, and sufficient and updated books. The fact that she did not have a carpet meant that learners read together at their tables in pairs due to a shortage of books. This crippled her ability to give one-on-one attention during a reading lesson. In addition to these challenges were the parents' limited involvement in their children's literacy development and the fact that they were also most likely illiterate. Paradoxically, the participant alluded that the learners liked prescriptive literature with colourful books that drew their attention and supported comprehension when the learners did not understand the text.

4.3.3.1.19 Discussion

From the data collected, it was evident that the participant grew up in a privileged, homely condition and under liveable socio-economic circumstances. Her educational background and literacy journey were provided with educational stimulation as well as literary exposure from a young age. Her reading preference reflects adult literature even though she had limited time to read, was not involved in any literacy development projects and attested that she needed to read more.

Contrary to what she was accustomed to, the data collected outlined that learners did not have sufficient stimulation at home which was primarily influenced by poor socio-economic circumstances, poor parental involvement, and a lack of resources and access to resources. As a result, children also did not demonstrate a love for reading, more especially if the parents did not read. Since parents demonstrated minimal involvement due to several reasons, it was speculated, according to her, that they also did not encourage their children to go to the library.

In addition to the aforementioned, the participant faced numerous challenges such as teaching prescriptive literature in Grade 1 without sufficient books, no carpet, inadequate space to teach and move freely, outdated books, and an overcrowded classroom. At the time of the interview, the participant was highly despondent because she did not have a carpet in her class to teach prescriptive literature on.

With regards to the content of the prescriptive literature, the participant alluded that books are translated from English to Afrikaans for the South African school context. Since these books insignificantly depict South Africa, its culture, heritage, and norms, it can be stated that prescriptive literature in Grade 1 is of Eurocentric descent. This indicates that Eurocentric epistemological domination is evident in South African children's literature prescribed for Grade 1. This is problematic on its own as the participant mentioned that the books also do not reflect the children's livelihoods, their backgrounds, or their immediate frame of reference. According to Bradbery (2012:5), children's literature should assist children in understanding current and confronting issues. Children's literature is a powerful text that ought to assist children in understanding their identity, community, and families. Additionally, it should broaden their understanding of the world and entail encounters that they can relate to (Adam *et al.*, 2019:551). Failure to include African social constructs can be detrimental to the development (Buntu, 2013:6) of Grade 1 learners. The participant indicated that she had no latitude to make any contributions regarding the types, genre or choice of prescribed books for Grade 1. Al Darwish (2014:78) highly criticized this method and called it 'selected and teacher-controlled readings'. Teachers are being restricted by only using text and resources provided by the department (Venketsamy & Sibanda, 2021:263). In addition to this predicament, the participant did not disclose extensive knowledge of the types, genres, language and grammar, or aesthetic and cognitive value that children's literature in Grade 1 should entail. Another great concern was the children's attitude and state of mind towards their prescriptive reading materials. It was alarming that there were learners who did not take pride in their work or the prescriptive reading materials provided by the school.

Dissatisfaction with the curriculum was evident throughout the interview. The participant alluded to the fact that all teachers were expected to deliver the curriculum, but the Department of Education did not consider the socio-economic circumstances of learners, nor did they provide adequate resources to deliver what was expected. According to the participant, the CAPS curriculum did not provide learners with equal opportunities to later become educated adults who could optimally function and integrate into society.

In conclusion, children take pleasure in reading books, particularly when they can understand and relate to the text. Additionally, if beautiful and brightly coloured pictures are alongside the text, they serve an explanatory purpose. Illustrations added to text hold the aesthetic value that can capture and increase the interest of the target audience. Children are immersed in a visual culture where images are central to their experiences and interactions (Short, 2018:289). According to Keng Ong (2010:251), illustrations do not only have aesthetic value but also hold immense cognitive benefits. However, the entire teaching and learning experience of prescriptive literature in Grade 1 is influenced by several complexities beyond the intervention of the teacher.

4.3.3.2 Focus group analysis

This focus group interview aimed to capitalize on communication between research participants to generate informative data on the teachers' perspectives on factors that influence how they teach prescriptive literature in Grade 1 and ultimately answer the research question and sub-questions. The group interaction was explicitly used as a method to explore the participants' knowledge and experiences. This structured session was used to examine what the participants thought, how, and why they thought that way.

The focus group was conducted with four isiXhosa-speaking teachers whose second or third language was English. As a result, inaccurate sentence construction became apparent intermittently. During the interview, the use of interjections was often used to express feelings or perspectives and also answers in some instances. Andrason and Dlali (2020:161) alluded to this phenomenon from a pragmatic perspective and stated that interjections are claimed to be produced as "responses". This is vital to comprehend because interjections are important for the successful transmission of the message, and combined with linguistic gestures, are of crucial importance for communication with isiXhosa first language speakers (Andrason & Matutu, 2019:13). In this focus group interview the use of cognitive and emotive interjections was used to encode emotions of the participants as well as phatic interjections that specified the attitude of the participant towards the specific topic by sustaining or terminating the conversation (Andrason & Matutu, 2019:4). Pseudonyms used for the four participants in this focus group were P01, P02, P03, P04.

4.3.3.2.1 Personal reading habits of the teachers

A question was posed regarding the reading habits of the teachers. The quotes which follow indicate the participants' perspectives on their reading habits.

P01 [0:01:32] L27-30: When, when I've got time, I'm doing that. But now there's this TV time now, and now was also busy with our programmes and what, schoolwork. But when I've got time, I just take a bit, and sometimes I also go to Google, you see, and learn some things there ...

P03 [0:02:55-59] 59-63: When I have time ...I read my Bible. Yes, otherwise, I don't have time really.

P04 [0:00:20] L3: I don't read much.

P02 [0:00:34] L11-12: Yes, I do like reading. I do like reading, if I do have plenty time to go through the reading, I will do that. But because of the time, we don't have enough time.

All the participants indicated that they do like reading but only read when they had the time to do so. P04 indicated that she did not read much whilst P02 stated that whenever she had time to read, she read the Bible. P01 demonstrated the challenge of the 'visual culture' (§2.3.4) whereby she read if she had time but apportioned time to browse on Google and watch television programs.

4.3.3.2.2 Participation in literacy projects

The participants were asked to state their involvement in literacy projects at or outside of the school.

P03 [0:04:13] L85-87: Um, I'm not sure if, uh, the programme took place here, where I was twenty years back. There was a programme, I don't know if it was from the NGO. It was eh called READ.

The participants could not recall any recent involvement in literacy projects. Only a literacy project with a non-governmental organization (NGO) from a long time ago could be recalled. Participants mainly responded with an interjection, *uh-uh*, indicating 'no'. Therefore, it can be stated that the teachers in this focus group did not partake in literacy projects at or outside the school.

4.3.3.2.3 Training to teach prescriptive literature

To answer the sub-question about the teachers' preparation or training that they received to teach Grade 1 literature, the participants responded as follows:

P02 [0:17:00] L323-326: And they do not give proper training, because we're doing it online. Sometimes the network, now there's a load shedding, and everything just cuts off, you see. You can't, can't just go on with that. And for the data, you have to buy on your own because there's no Wi-Fi now.

P02 [0:20:31] L382-384: Some of them are making a lot of noise in the back there, you can't even hear, you see. And those people just are rushing, rushing, rushing, rushing, rushing for the time.

According to P02, the training that was given to teach prescriptive literature in Grade 1 did not suffice. Firstly, because it was an online training session it came with multiple challenges such as a lack of Wi-Fi access, load-shedding, and data expenses from the teacher's pocket. Secondly, since it was not a one-on-one session, engagement was limited. According to P02, you could not just raise your hand if you had questions, there was audible background noise and presenters rushed through the training due to time restrictions. P01 agreed and added that there were too many and suggested that training be done at the Cape Teaching and Leadership Institute (CTLI) in Kuilsrivier. Therefore, according to the participants, the recent training that they received to teach prescriptive literature in Grade 1 was not adequate to satisfy the demand for the training that they needed.

4.3.3.2.4 Teachers' latitude in choosing prescriptive literature

Since teachers must be experts in choosing the correct literature for their class (§2.4), a question was posed to establish the participants' involvement in selecting prescriptive literature for their classroom. The participants responded with the following quotes:

P03 [0:16:42] L315-316: They just send us everything. We never discuss with them.

P02 [0:16:55] L321: We are just given; we must do this.

According to the participants, teachers did not have any leeway to choose prescriptive children's literature for their classes. There was no consultation process where they could sit and discuss suitable literature for their classes. P02 stated that they were just expected to do whatever was given to them and after three weeks it should have been completed.

4.3.3.2.5 Children's literature with Western themes, content or depictions

Within this post-colonial context, it is critical to investigate the knowledge children gain in the classroom and its relation to messages conveyed in children's literature. This theme only emerged from the data in the focus group because the free-flowing discussion lent itself towards asking the participants their perspectives on the nature and content of the prescriptive literature that they received, since they did not have any latitude in selecting prescriptive literature for their classes. The following quotes were the responses of the participants:

P03 [0:07:06] L121: It's not good because it's un-educational.

P04 [0:07:44] L133-134: And it is meaningless, they don't want the meaningless stories, and they know.

P02 [0:07:19] L129: Because it's not so relevant now to their life right now.

The participants agreed that children's literature consisting of Western or Eurocentric themes was non-educational, irrelevant, and meaningless for the children in their classes. According to the participants, the children were interested in current stories. P02 recalled her curriculum training when Curriculum 2005 was implemented and alluded that they were trained to teach what was relevant to the child and the situations that they found themselves in, referring to their frame of reference.

4.3.3.2.6 CAPS

The research sub-question, *How do Grade 1 teachers interpret CAPS and implement this in their teaching?* was asked to establish the participants' viewpoints regarding their interpretation, understanding and implementation of the policy document. The participants stated the following:

P02 [0:37:31] L712-713: I'm sure CAPS is being adopted from other countries; you see.

P03 [0:39:20] L752-753: It's because of the hidden curriculum, they've hidden something there.

P03 [0:39:49] L761: It's, their opportunities are limited.

According to P01 and P02 the curriculum that is currently implemented was adopted from other countries and was adjusted for the South African school context. The participants stated that they were expected to implement two additional guidelines with the curriculum policy document which were the ATP's and the guidelines of Funda Wande. P03 made mention of a hidden curriculum but could not elaborate on the statement. According to the participants, the implementation of the CAPS curriculum provided learners with limited opportunities, mainly due to a lack of resources that should have been accompanied by the policy document. The Principle of Liberty, as per Rawls's *A Theory of Justice*, guides an investigation on whether the current curriculum as well as the CAPS document are providing all Grade 1 learners the opportunity to exercise basic rights and liberties, particularly in the model of a quintile 1 school. When the question was posed on how this privation would affect the education of the least privileged child in the class, P02 responded by saying that the learner would academically be left behind.

4.3.3.2.7 Resources

From the commencement of the topic of resources that were needed to deliver the curriculum, participants expressed emotive interjections indicating dismay and annoyance due to a lack of appropriate resources. According to Andrason and Dlali (2020:161), these interjections are typical forms of emotions listed in grammar.

The principle of equal opportunity (§2.6.4.1) provides a framework to pose the question of whether literary resources were distributed in a way that provided all children in Grade 1 with an equal opportunity to become readers who could resonate with the text and whether adequate resources were available for children to become proficient readers. The participants indicated major concerns regarding the access and availability of the correct resources, and these were related to paying themselves and creating themselves. The participants' responses are arranged in the following four

sub-sections: Adequate resources, funding for isiXhosa resources, creating resources, technology in the classroom, and correctness of prescriptive literary resources.

P03 [0:08:19-25] L146-148: We want them to, if we can add more of them. Not enough for them.

All the participants expressed their despondence towards the lack of resources to comprehensively teach prescriptive literature in Grade 1. They did not have enough books and wanted the school and the Department of Basic Education to provide more resources.

P02 [0:14:48] 279: Ja. We buy with our own money.
P01 [0:16:16] 1 L304: Not enough funds for us.

All the participants agreed that the school was not provided with sufficient funds to buy isiXhosa resources for all their classrooms. When they needed resources to deliver the curriculum effectively, they needed to use their own money to buy the resources.

P03 [0:14:12] L271-272: but for isi-Xhosa, we don't have resources for isi-Xhosa. You have to create your own resources for isi-Xhosa.

P02 [0:15:09] L287-290: And you have to go to PostNet to do the photocopying, all colours, we even have to laminate it, you can't laminate with the, if you want the A3 you must go to PostNet. And who's paying that? It's you.

Since the classrooms were not provided with adequate resources, teachers had to create their additional isiXhosa resources using their own money to photocopy, print and laminate. According to the participants, this was an expensive and labour-intensive practice that could be avoided in an educationally just society.

P02 [0:30:52] L572-574: And other things, if we have a whiteboard, I think the whiteboard can help us, because I'm don't have even a whiteboard. But you use that board with us.

P03 [0:31:45] L594-595: If maybe we can also have in our classroom, those laptop

P03 [0:31:55] L599: ... tablets, and because it goes with the smart board.

The topic of technology in the classroom emerged when the participants discussed the lack of resources in their classrooms. According to the participants, children had a

fondness for technology. Therefore, technological resources such as laptops, tablets, and smartboards would be an advantage to teaching and learning in the classroom.

P01 [0:40:42] L783-784: They have got paragraphs; they have got paragraphs.

P02 [0:40:48] L785: It was not thick like this, and even for the paragraphs, yoh-

P01 [0:40:56] L789: Difficult for a Grade 1 learner.

A participant made a comparison with the type of prescriptive literature ex- Model C schools have and their Quintile 1 school. According to the participant, prescriptive literature in ex-Model C schools was easier to read compared to the isiXhosa prescriptive literature books, implying that the prescriptive literature in Grade 1 for isiXhosa learners was not on their developmental level. P01 and P02 stated that the books were thick, had long paragraphs, and the words were too difficult. Therefore, the participants stated that they wanted the right books that could enhance reading. This was a concern because according to Al Darwish (2014), the length of the book must be comfortable and age-appropriate, and the language must be simple and on the developmental level of the child (Al Darwish, 2014:79). Moreover, Evans *et al.* (2018:135) advise that books for the Grade 1 classroom should be between 10 – 20 pages in length, including illustrations with text that is more reflective of written than spoken words.

In essence, all the participants reached an accord that they did not have the correct and sufficient resources to deliver the isiXhosa curriculum and, effectively teach prescriptive literature in Grade 1.

4.3.3.2.8 Socio-economic circumstances of learners

Since the socio-economic circumstances of learners cannot be isolated from factors that influence how teachers teach prescriptive literature, this point of discussion was particularly raised from a Social Justice perspective. This was done because Social Justice demands equal opportunities for all learners from the poorest to the wealthiest margin of society. The following was quoted:

P02 [0:12:1] L233-235: ...some of them, if you can go now to Mandela, there's an area there, they say, Makwaleni, there's no electricity on that side. There's Esetweni, Maseru, there's no electricity.

P01 [0:12:49] L237: ...even the parents are not working.

The learners in the Grade 1 classes descended from poor socio-economic circumstances. Learners resided in squatter camps or informal settlements that consisted of informal dwellings (shacks). Certain learners came from areas where there was no electricity and high unemployment statistics. According to the participants, parents were also often not working. According to Dzimiri and Goso (2018:14), this level of poverty has a detrimental effect on children's academics, hence it needs to be considered in our quest to create an educationally just educational environment and equal learning opportunities for learners.

4.3.3.2.9 Parental involvement

As with the semi-structured interview, the same questions on parental involvement were posed to establish whether poor socio-economic circumstances, which was an indicator of the social class of parents in this school, influenced how teachers teach prescriptive literature.

P02 [0:19:11] L361-364: Ooh, yes. Even now, it was during, before the closing, we, we gave them the letters for the parents, so that they can just, the list to buy. But even now, this is the end of the second month and now there are no covers, nothing, no stationary, nothing, from the parents.

According to P02, certain parents failed to fulfil their responsibility to buy the educational materials required for their children, which would have allowed teachers to effectively deliver the curriculum.

4.3.3.2.9.1 Training for parents

As the discussion flowed, the participants mentioned that they had to present a session at school to train parents on the importance of being involved in their children's academic activities. The participant mentioned the following:

P01 [0:45:18] L883-885: We had to train parents, yes. That your parent... Training parents here so that they can understand what's happening and they can do that with the learners at home, with their children.

According to Dzimiri and Goso (2018:14), these levels of poverty impact parenting practices that are often linked to behavioural difficulties in young children. Therefore, according to the participants, given the socio-economic circumstances of the parents, it was particularly important to provide support and guidance because the quality of the environment in which the child grows up has an impact on their development.

4.3.3.2.10 Children's attitude towards their prescriptive books

Given the socio-economic circumstances of the learners, participants were asked to give their perspectives on the children's attitudes towards their prescriptive books. The participant quoted:

P02 [0:19:49] L371-373: Uh, yoh, if those Funda Wande books, if you send them home, they will come with the gravy, with the coffee, dirty, all the stuff.

The participants agreed that each one of them had an experience where books were sent home, but they came back stained or damaged. Since these learners were only in Grade 1, the participants were of the view that the parents had a partial responsibility to ensure that books returned to school dirt-free. For this reason, Hendricks *et al.* (2015:323) assert that a lack of social support is a factor that hinders aspirations and ultimately school commitment. However, Chioke (2022) states that this is a common phenomenon when children are raised in such circumstances. Poverty affects the psychological balance or homeostatic balance in the classroom which causes frustration, low perception, low concentration and withdrawal (Chioke, 2022:29).

4.3.3.2.11 Children's literature that reflects their lived experience

Since prescriptive literature that reflects the child's livelihood is beneficial to the holistic development of the child (Chapter 2), the participants stated their perspectives on the advantages that they had witnessed.

- P02 [0:11:29] L211: They get so enthusiastic.
- P01 [0:11:31] L212-213: It expands their mind, their knowledge. And they become creative, yes.
- P01 [0:11:39]: And they can also solve their problems through that.
- P02 [0:11:42] L215: And they can write their own stories.

The participants agreed that children's literature that reflects the livelihoods of the children would be more beneficial for their development. Children showed interest in such stories and reacted more enthusiastically toward them. Moreover, literature that reflected their livelihoods expanded their knowledge and cognitive abilities, inspired creativity, and assisted them in solving problems.

4.3.3.2.12 Funda Wande

The Western Cape Education Department is in collaboration with Funda Wande, a non-profit organization that aims to equip teachers to teach reading for meaning in Grades R-3. The collaboration provides policy-aligned, evidence-based, and independently evaluated literacy materials for all Foundation Phase, Afrikaans, and isiXhosa Home Language learners in the Western Cape (Funda Wanda, 2024).

This theme emerged from the discussion on the teacher's perspective of the prescriptive literature that they are currently teaching. The participants stated the following:

- P02 [0:08:45] L158-161: It's so interesting, because now, the story is based on what is happening right now, because they are learning about Themba Bavuma, all this stuff, the players, Kolisi, all Siya Kolisi, these, those are the relevant stories, they know.
- P03 [0:14:12] L270-271: Funda Wande gave us resources at least we got, uh, Funda Wande mathematics.
- P02 [0:27:37] L510-511: So, at least by Funda Wande, they make things better, compared to the previous.
- P02 [0:27:46] L513: There's a lot of improvement with Funda Wande.

The participants reached a consensus that the implementation of the Funda Wande program indicated great improvement because the literacy development program

provided resources that children found interesting and relevant to their current frame of reference.

4.3.3.2.13 Diversity in children's literature

Linked to the qualitative content analysis and the sub-question: *What are the teachers' perspectives on the content of the prescribed literature?* the participants were asked to elaborate on their perspective on the diversity in prescriptive literature in their Grade 1 class.

P01 [0:28:25] L522-524: Where there are Hindus, where there are Xhosa people who are wearing Xhosa clothes, né, and what they do, and also their festivals. We've got them mos né. And also going to church during these times, going to be.

P04 [0:29:23] L541: Different cultures, né.

According to the participants, elements of diversity did emerge in some of the books that they were using to teach prescriptive literature. They made mention of different cultures, religions, and festivals. The majority of participants reached a consensus that cultural elements had to be encompassed in the prescriptive literature of children. However, books that included stories of disabilities were still not included in the prescriptive literature that they needed to teach. No books that they had come across included topics of disabilities which raised a concern about exclusionary practices based on characteristics (§2.6.1). The participants also did not make any mention of such books. This is counter to the concept of Social Justice that demands opportunities, inclusivity, and equal rights for all persons.

4.3.3.2.14 Overcrowded classrooms

Overcrowded classrooms are known to pose a disadvantage to the child during any engagement with literature as prescribed by the CAPS curriculum. Participants were asked to elaborate on factors that influenced how they taught prescriptive literature. Their responses were as follows:

P02 [0:13:22] L250: We've got more than forty learners in a grade, in Grade 1.

P03 [0:14:00] L263: Overcrowded.

The majority of the participants expressed dismay about their overcrowded classrooms which were filled to capacity with more than 40 learners in a class. As much as the teachers would have liked to teach prescriptive literature on a carpet, in a group, and provide one-on-one attention to their reading, there was no space in the classrooms to do that. Their classrooms were filled to capacity.

4.3.3.2.15 Language barriers

The participants raised another concern during the focus group discussion which was that they were experiencing a language barrier since they had received an influx of learners from neighbouring countries and other provinces in South Africa.

P01 [0:12:49] L238: ...you see now, we also have got a language barrier with them. They are speaking iSotho.

P02 [0:13:00] L239: Isi-Shona, or Afrikaans also, in one class.

P02 [0:13:22] L249: It's a crisis.

The focus group agreed that their Grade 1 classes were also confronted with yet another educational crisis. Teachers were expected to teach prescriptive literature in a classroom where the learners' home languages were other than isiXhosa. The different languages that the children spoke, were Sotho, Shona, and Afrikaans.

4.3.3.2.16 Discussion

From this qualitative analysis, it became apparent that the Grade 1 teachers did not read a lot of books and if time permitted, indulged in Bible reading, browsing, and reading on Google or watching television programs. Participants could also not recall any recent participation in literacy projects. Inadequate training had been received to teach prescriptive literature in Grade 1 as it was an online training session with ample challenges like a lack of Wi-Fi, insufficient data, load-shedding, limited engagement, and restricted time constraints. A recommendation was made that training to teach prescriptive literature in Grade 1 should be done at the Cape Teaching and Leadership Institute in Kuilsrivier.

According to the participants, Grade 1 teachers did not have any latitude in choosing prescriptive literature for their classes nor were they part of any consultation process concerning the type of literature they should teach. They received guidelines and instructions from the curriculum advisors at the Western Cape Education Department and were expected to implement what was stated in the instruction. Participants believed that the prescriptive literature that they taught consisted of Western and Eurocentric elements that were non-educational, irrelevant, and meaningless to the learners. Essentially, the latter raises a concern of social bias in children's literature and a lack of development in socio-cultural consciousness. The prescriptive literature that they were using to teach reading did address minimum concepts of diversity but none on disabilities. This is problematic as Al Darwish (2014:79) alludes to the fact that the content of children's literature must include cultural information that the children can relate to their own experiences, interests, and backgrounds. Adam *et al.*, (2019:551) concur and state that this includes diversity in the form of race, language, culture, disability, and appearance. The aforementioned is critical for the child to gain insight into their lives and their relationship with others (Al Darwish, 2014:81). Participants did however agree that cultural elements had to be encompassed in prescriptive literature as this would be highly beneficial for the learner. Participants responded positively towards the literacy development collaboration with the Western Cape Education Department and Funda Wandé and averred that reading materials were current and relevant to the learners' framework.

According to the focus group, children learnt to read prescriptive literature more easily and more enthusiastically when the text was current, relevant to their lives, and within their frame of reference. Moreover, it would be beneficial for their cognitive development as it would expand their knowledge, inspire creativity, and assist them with problem-solving. Stakić, (2014:250); Evans *et al.*, (2018:66) and Bradbery, (2012:4) affirm that relevant and inclusive literary works encourage creativity, imagination and critical thinking skills for cognitive development.

The focus group data indicated that the participants believed that CAPS was a curriculum adopted from another country and adjusted for the South African schooling context, and mentioned that CAPS had a hidden curriculum. They could not elaborate on what was meant by a hidden curriculum. From the participants' perspective, the

data indicated that the CAPS curriculum provided limited opportunities for learners and schools that did not have sufficient resources for the effective implementation of the curriculum. The focus group interview revealed that the least privileged child in the class was faced with a strong possibility of being left behind academically, due to the reality of limited opportunities and resources that were expected to accompany the CAPS curriculum implementation. The challenge of resources, a lack of technological resources and appropriate literary resources for Grade 1, and a lack of isiXhosa resources and books were some of the biggest influencing factors when it came to teaching prescriptive literature. In addition to the latter, Grade 1 teachers were confronted with overcrowded classrooms, limited space, and language barriers. Poor socio-economic circumstances of learners, which were mainly the epitome of unemployed parents, often resulted in inequality and social instability, another critical factor teachers were attempting to contend with. Moreover, poor parent involvement was a crucial encounter that the school was striving to mitigate by training parents on how to help and guide their children with their schoolwork. It was apparent that the abovementioned challenges were constituted by social positions, socio-economic inequalities, economic inequities as well as power relations, which privileged some groups while marginalizing, disadvantaging, and excluding other groups (Hölscher, 2014:23).

4.3.3.3 Merging of the data from the semi-structured interview and focus group

Data collected from the semi-structured interview and the focus group revealed that the teachers were no longer reading for their pleasure due to the heavy administrative and didactical workload in their classrooms. Furthermore, they were also not engaging in literacy projects that could broaden their knowledge of prescriptive children's literature. It became evident that these teachers did not have leeway in choosing prescriptive literature for their classrooms and that a highly criticized centralised system was still operated by the education district offices and subject advisors. It was also blatantly clear that they did not receive adequate training to teach prescriptive literature in Grade 1. Participants agreed that prescriptive literature in Grade 1 as well as the CAPS curriculum were entrenched with Western epistemology that posed a disadvantage to the learners in their class. Poor socio-economic circumstances, poor

parental involvement, overcrowded classrooms, and a lack of sufficient resources were factors hindering the effectiveness of delivering the curriculum as well as teaching prescriptive literature. According to the participants, topics on diversity, transformation, disability, and culture were either not, or minimally addressed in prescriptive literature in Grade 1, even though inclusiveness and reflections on their lived experiences were critical for the children's development. None of the participants mentioned books that included the LGBTIQ+ (§2.3.6) communities. However, participants from the isiXhosa school applauded the new reading series, Funda Wandé, and were anticipating positive outcomes, as the content was relevant, captivating, aesthetically appealing and written within a South African context.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter provides the reader with a description of the biographical profile of the participants, the research findings garnered from the content, the River of Life, a semi-structured interview, and a focus group. From the analysis it was evident that Western epistemology is transmitted through prescriptive children's literature in Grade 1 and African or Indigenous knowledge systems are being neglected, particularly in the Afrikaans classroom. Teachers revealed a lack of knowledge of children's literature, firstly, due to embedded historical social phenomena. Secondly, their literacy journey had been filled with Western education that transmitted a culture contradictory to what would have been transmitted from an African worldview. This Eurocentric canon in children's literature is problematic as it attributes truth only to the Western way of knowledge production, primarily under the assumption that Western European philosophies, values, culture, and heritage are qualitatively superior. It is apparent that the literacy journey of the teachers does not only affect the way that they teach but also the content that they teach. It was therefore critical to investigate the knowledge children gain in the classroom and its relation to messages conveyed in children's literature. Teachers are confronted with a plethora of challenges, including the current CAPS curriculum, that limit full and meaningful participation, condone inequality and deny equal opportunities. Social Justice in education is pivotal for the development of young learners because of the injustices disclosed in this data analysis. Significantly, Woods (2018:3) postulates that all children, even those coming from the highest poverty-stricken communities, must have access to basic skills of literacy and must be

provided an opportunity to become and be recognized members of society. Chapter 5 will present the conclusion of the study and will answer the research questions as posed in Chapter 1.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This research enquiry took the form of an exploratory case study (§3.2) that utilized a qualitative content analysis (§3.5.1; §4.3.1), a River of Life activity (§3.5.2; §4.3.2), a semi-structured interview (§3.5.3; §4.3.3.1), and a focus group interview (§3.5.4; §4.3.3.2). The objective was to investigate the teachers' perspectives on the factors that influence teaching prescriptive literature in Grade 1. The purpose of this chapter is to firstly answer the research questions and secondly to initiate a discussion towards the Social Justice implications of what was found in this study. The main research question that guided this study was: *What are the teachers' perspectives on factors that influence teaching prescriptive literature in Grade 1?*

To answer the main research question, six sub-questions were posed which will be answered first. These sub-questions aimed to determine the content and depictions of Grade 1 prescriptive literature, the teachers' perspectives thereof, how their personal literacy journeys reflected the way they taught, the preparation or training they received to teach prescriptive literature, how they interpreted and implemented the CAPS document in teaching prescriptive literature and ultimately the challenges that they were confronted with when teaching prescriptive literature. This is important because it provides a broad overview of factors that influence teaching prescriptive literature in Grade 1.

5.2 SUB-QUESTION 1: What are the depictions and content of prescriptive literature in Grade 1?

From Table 4.2, 4.3 and the qualitative content analysis (§4.3.1) in Chapter 4, it was evident that prescriptive literature in Grade 1 portrayed elements of Eurocentrism through depictions and content. Prescriptive books from the Afrikaans school portrayed more white characters as protagonists and often depicted darker or black characters as secondary characters. Additionally, more books with Eurocentric concepts were

from the Afrikaans school (§4.3.1.1) than the isiXhosa school. Prescriptive literature from the isiXhosa schools (§4.3.1.2) mostly portrayed darker and black characters, and white characters were in the minority, which was a more accurate reflection of ethnic population groups in South Africa. The majority of the books from the isiXhosa school had South African representation whereas the Afrikaans prescriptive books, of British origin, had no representation of South Africa. Furthermore, the analysis revealed a hidden message in books from both schools. The hidden message from the Afrikaans prescriptive books, which were of British descent, depicted a black male as angry, piteous, and sad (§4.3.1.1) which is a common problem in children's literature, derogatory and a form of human "hidden" dehumanization (§2.3.10). Conversely, the hidden message that was identified in the prescriptive literature from the isiXhosa school that was written for the South African schooling contexts, addressed the unequal power relation between males and females (§4.3.1.2) and ultimately gender stereotyping in children's literature (§2.3.6).

5.3 SUB-QUESTION 2: What are the teachers' perspectives on the content of the prescriptive literature in Grade 1?

According to the participants, prescriptive literature in Grade 1 did not exactly reflect the lived experiences of the children, particularly concerning their own experiences, interests, and backgrounds (§4.3.3.1.14, §4.3.3.2.11). There were minimal depictions of diversity in the form of race, culture, disability, appearance, and South African representation in these prescriptive books (§4.3.3.1.15, §4.3.3.2.13, §4.3.3.1.16), and from a Social Justice perspective this was detrimental to the children's holistic development (§2.6.2). Children were often unable to resonate and culturally identify themselves with depictions and characters, hence it did not support literacy development or the development of socio-cultural consciousness (§2.5). This was evident from the data in the qualitative content analysis of these books (§4.3.1). From their perspective, the prescriptive literature that they taught consisted of Western epistemology and Eurocentric social constructs (§2.6.3) that were non-educational, irrelevant, and meaningless to the learners (§4.3.3.2.5). This phenomenon most commonly occurs in the Afrikaans classroom.

5.4 SUB-QUESTION 3: How do Grade 1 teachers' personal literacy journeys reflect how they teach children's literature?

Professional knowledge (§2.4), historical literary experiences (§2.5), and the teacher's disposition (§2.4) influence the way teachers introduce children's literature and ultimately how they teach it. The participants demonstrated a lack of professional knowledge of children's literature, particularly when they were requested to indicate their knowledge and preference for children's literature, key influences on their journey, their involvement in literacy activities, reading habits, and favourite genres (§3.6.2; §4.3.3.2.1). Their literacy journeys relied on historical literary experiences, teacher training, and sporadic workshops (§4.3.3.2.3). Since their historical literary experiences (§4.3.2.2) derived from an era of Apartheid where Indigenous epistemologies were ignored and colonial education was constructed based on white supremacy (Lebeloane, 2017:2) and Western epistemic dominance (§2.6.3), the participants in this study seemed to rely on the Western way of teaching and delving into knowledge systems. Therefore, this inquiry demonstrated that Grade 1 teachers needed to reflect upon their personal history to apply new theoretical knowledge (§2.5). This is critically important because the Eurocentric canon attributes truth under the assumption that Western European philosophies, values, culture, and heritage are qualitatively superior to that of the African worldview.

5.5 SUB-QUESTION 4: What preparation or training did Grade 1 teachers receive to teach Grade 1 literature?

The participants stated that they were trained to teach reading at their respective teacher education training institutions (§4.3.2.1; §4.3.3.1.7). However, no indication was given as to whether the participants were specifically trained to teach prescriptive children's literature in Grade 1, as guided by the CAPS document. From participants' responses, it was evident that they did not receive adequate training to teach prescriptive literature in Grade 1 (§4.3.3.1.7, §4.3.3.2.3), particularly because they could not recall any workshops that covered teaching prescriptive literature in Grade 1. Moreover, the language workshops that they attended, were ineffective as they frequently had to overcome difficult challenges to be able to attend the workshops.

These included a lack of Wi-Fi, insufficient data, load-shedding, limited engagement, and restricted time constraints (§4.3.3.2.3).

5.6 SUB-QUESTION 5: How do Grade 1 teachers interpret CAPS and implement this in their teaching?

The CAPS Foundation Phase Home Language document outlines what should be taught in Grade 1 as well as the content standards that must be met. With regards to the interpretation and implementation of the policy document, the participants expressed challenges, disagreements, and viewpoints through their visual narratives (§4.3.2.7) in the River of Life activity as well as in the semi-structured interview (§4.3.3.1.9) and the focus group (§4.3.3.2.6). The participants openly expressed their despondency towards the curriculum as they interpreted it as rigid, with an immeasurable amount of policy reading, and simply more work that came with the COVID-19 pandemic which caused some curriculum adjustments (§4.3.3.2.6), even though the CAPS policy document was an improvement on the OBE and the RNCS policy documents. In addition, the policy document was a schooling curriculum that did not provide learners with equal opportunities to later become educated adults who can optimally function and integrate into society (§4.3.3.1.19). Participants agreed that the CAPS curriculum was entrenched with Western knowledge systems that posed a disadvantage to the learners in their class because the curriculum was adopted from overseas and adjusted for the South African school context (§4.3.3.2.6).

Regarding the implementation of the curriculum, the participants stated that all teachers were expected to deliver the curriculum, but the Department of Education did not consider the socio-economic circumstances (§4.3.3.2.8; §4.3.3.1.11) of learners, nor did they provide adequate resources (§4.3.3.1.10; §4.3.3.2.7) to deliver what was expected. Instead, more work had to be done as they needed to implement two additional guidelines with the curriculum policy document which were the ATP's and the guidelines of Funda Wandé (§4.3.3.2.12).

5.7 SUB-QUESTION 6: What are the challenges experienced by teachers in teaching prescriptive literature in Grade 1?

From this research study, it was evident that teachers were confronted with a plethora of challenges that influenced teaching prescriptive literature in Grade 1. Teachers had no latitude in choosing prescriptive books for their classes (§4.3.3.1.8; §4.3.3.2.4) due to a centralised system implemented by the education district office (§2.3.10). In addition, they were not included in any decision-making process concerning the type of prescriptive literature they were obligated to teach. From the data collected, it was evident that overcrowded classrooms (§4.3.3.1.17, §4.3.3.2.14), limited space, no carpets to teach group-guided reading, old and outdated books (§4.3.3.1.18), a lack of appropriate resources and technology for teaching reading (§4.3.3.2.7), and language barriers (§4.3.3.2.15) influenced the pedagogy of the teachers. Furthermore, the fact that teachers needed to use their own money to create appropriate resources to teach reading (§4.3.3.2.7) was extremely problematic in itself.

The poor socio-economic circumstances (§4.3.3.1.11; §4.3.3.2.8) of the learners resulted in mammoth challenges concerning basic resources that they needed in class, simply because neither the teachers nor the learners were able to provide the necessary resources to teach prescriptive literature and implement the curriculum effectively. Poor socio-economic circumstances were a result of inequality and often caused social instability among learners. This was mainly the epitome of unemployed parents and was often the justification for poor parental involvement. Poor parental involvement (§4.3.3.1.12; §4.3.3.2.9) was stated as a challenge as the participants felt that they were not getting the necessary support from the parents to develop learners optimally and holistically. It is a significant concern that participants alluded to the fact that the learners had a nonchalant attitude toward their prescriptive literature (§4.3.3.1.13; §4.3.3.2.10). This careless attitude of learners can also be attributed to the Eurocentric canon that is enjoying hegemony in the prescriptive literature that is taught in Grade 1 because it lacks cultural relativity (§2.3.8). This is particularly problematic as one of the objectives of reading and teaching children's literature is not only to develop the learners holistically but also to produce a pleasurable experience and nurture life-long readers (§2.3.9).

5.8 Teachers' perspectives of factors that influence the teaching of prescriptive literature in Grade 1

Consolidating the research sub-questions ultimately enabled me to answer the main research question which was: *What are the teachers' perspectives on factors that influence the teaching of prescriptive literature in Grade 1?*

It was evident that the majority of the content and depictions of prescriptive literature in Grade 1 were irrelevant and not educational to learners. The Eurocentric content found in the prescriptive literature (§4.3.1.1; §4.3.1.2) can be attributed to the dominance of Western knowledge systems that are enjoying carte blanche in the South African schooling system (§2.6). As a result, Grade 1 teachers are teaching prescriptive literature that their learners cannot relate to culturally nor does it consist of themes that can help them understand or confront issues in their current circumstances (§2.3.7). The Western way of knowing, which is evident from the participants' literacy journeys (§4.3.2), influences the way that they apply their knowledge. Therefore, it can be said that Western epistemic dominance is an element that influences teaching prescriptive literature in Grade 1.

From the perspectives of the participants, the rigid and content-heavy CAPS curriculum (§2.2) affected how the curriculum was implemented because it had to be followed despite insufficient resources (§4.3.3.1.10; §4.3.3.2.7). Other variables include additional guidelines and programs (§4.3.3.2.6; §4.3.3.2.12) that need to be implemented without proper resources and training. This is a phenomenon that perpetuates social inequality because it places the least privileged school and child at a disadvantage.

From a pedagogical perspective, teachers encountered several challenges (§4.3.3.1.18). They were omitted from the decision-making process of selecting prescriptive literature for their classrooms. They were teaching prescriptive literature to learners from poor socio-economic circumstances and poverty-stricken communities who seemed to have lost a passion for reading their prescriptive books. A lack of resources, sufficient space, overcrowded classrooms, poor parental involvement, language barriers, limited access to technology, and the fact that they had to use their

own money to create resources, were factors that influenced teaching prescriptive literature in Grade 1.

5.9 Social Justice implications of this study

This study was rooted in Social Justice and John Rawls's *A Theory of Justice* (1971) was the lens through which I analysed my data. Acknowledging the criticism of the theory, which includes that it can only be applied to 'favourable conditions' and not necessarily to improve current unjust arrangements or how to remedy injustices of the past 30 years (§2.6.4.2) after the transition from the system of Apartheid to democracy, the study acknowledged the strengths as well as the ethical and political implications that supported the theoretical strand of the research.

This study highlighted educational inequality (4.3.2.1; 4.3.2.3), a socially biased curriculum (§2.2; §4.3.2.7; §4.3.3.1.9; §4.3.3.2.6), the unequal distribution of resources (§2.2; §4.3.3.2.7; §4.3.3.1.10), the application of Western knowledge systems in the classroom (§4.3.1, §4.3.2), and a hegemonic Eurocentric canon in children's prescriptive literature (§2.6.3, §4.3.3.2.5), are factors that were detrimental to developing African knowledge systems and cultural consciousness. Due to social and economic inequality, historical disadvantages evident from the participants' literacy journeys (Figure 4.21, Figure 4.22, Figure 4.23, Figure 4.24, Figure 4.25, Figure 4.26), and poverty, the schooling system did not create an "equitable playground" (§2.6.2) for all learners to fully reach their potential. Rather the system disclosed a blatant disregard for African epistemology in children's literature such as fables, myths, legends, and proverbs (§2.6.3).

Moreover, it is imperative to urgently challenge Eurocentric ideologies and worldviews since they are designed to inculcate a sense of inferiority towards African knowledge systems (§2.6.3). Social Justice must be put into practice by institutionalizing a culture of non-oppressiveness that society's most vulnerable members can also benefit from. It is clear from the findings in this study that marginalization and exclusionary practices must be eradicated from the poorest margin of society to the wealthiest. Social Justice therefore requires that all individuals must

be provided with equal opportunities, equal rights, evenly distributed resources, and an equitable platform to participate.

5.10 Limitations

- The study did not have enough Afrikaans participants.
- I was limited to interviewing the participants outside of contact class time when they were available. The dates and times continually changed due to their gruelling workload.
- The scope of this study was limited as data were only collected from quintile 1 schools in the Cape Wineland Education District.
- The sample size of the study consisted of six participants and the specific books that they used in Grade 1, and therefore could not be generalized to the larger population.

5.11 Recommendations

Based on the outcomes of this research study, I would like to make the following recommendations to the schools, the Western Cape Education Department, and teacher training institutions.

5.11.1 Recommendations to schools

This study offers insight into the factors that influence teaching prescriptive literature in Grade 1. I recommend that the schools should do the following:

- Create access to literary resources beyond the prescriptive books that are selected by the district office and officials and taught by teachers.
- The River of Life activity should be used to determine the teachers' disposition towards teaching prescriptive literature in Grade 1.
- Provide Grade 1 teachers with the necessary resources and support to implement the curriculum effectively and teach prescriptive literature successfully.

- Troubling discourses of supremacy and colonialism are being transmitted through children's books which is an indoctrination of the dominant culture, its values, and beliefs. Schools must therefore be critically conscious of unintended messages that are sent through prescriptive literature and a hidden curriculum.

5.12 Recommendations for the Western Cape Education Department

- As a means of addressing the disproportionate representation of African and cultural diversity, I recommend that prescriptive literature for Grade 1 must be re-evaluated and selected based on criteria that incorporate Indigenous knowledge systems. Apply the principle of inclusivity and social transformation (South Africa. Department of Basic Education, 2011:4-5) by recognising cultural relativity in such a way that no culture in Grade 1 prescriptive literature is portrayed as superior or inferior to the other, they simply differ.
- In response to the dominance of the Eurocentric canon in prescriptive children's literature in Grade 1, I recommend a paradigm shift to Afrocentrism, where contemporary Afrocentric content is integrated into prescriptive literature.
- Provide adequate and interactive face-to-face training to teach prescriptive literature in Grade 1.
- Determine the need for resources from the viewpoint of Grade 1 teachers and provide the schools with adequate resources to implement the curriculum effectively and teach prescriptive literature successfully.

5.12.1 Recommendations for teacher training

- In response to the lack of professional knowledge regarding children's literature amongst Grade 1 teachers revealed in this enquiry, I recommend that coursework in the field of teacher education must include evidence that future teachers have established a repertoire of children's literature during the preparation program.
- Train future teachers to have a sufficient understanding of children's literature that can assist them to analyse, evaluate and select the text, so that they can

be critically conscious of the content that they use to teach prescriptive literature in Grade 1. In due course, they would be able to participate in the selection of books for their classrooms.

- The teacher education programmes must include coursework that exposes the dominance of the Eurocentric canon in children's literature in a South African schooling context.
- Train future teachers on how to respond to Western epistemic dominance when they encounter it in their practices.
- Since children are immersed in a visual culture where images are central to their experiences, the teacher education programme must prepare teachers for the digital future that includes the use of modern information and communication technologies to teach prescriptive literature in Grade 1.

5.13 Recommendations for future research

- To address social injustices in education which are mainly a result of inequality, and historical and social injustices, I recommend that further research be conducted.
- The Eurocentric canon in prescriptive literature in Grade 1 and the Western knowledge system that is enjoying *carte blanche* in the South African schooling curriculum must be addressed as a matter of urgency.
- For further research, more Afrikaans participants and more schools must be included in the study. Furthermore, a greater variety of books should be analysed so that the results can be generalised to a larger population.

5.14 Concluding remarks

The purpose of this chapter was to communicate the results, conclusions, and recommendations for this research enquiry. As a former Grade 1 teacher, the title of this study has been thought-provoking. Even though this was an intricate and laborious enquiry with various demands and limitations, the qualitative nature allowed me to adequately answer the research question and sub-questions. Accordingly, the aim and the objectives of the research study were met. Understanding that Social Justice in education must be considered as a matter of exigence to address past injustices. This

interpretation formed the basis for the formulation of recommendations to schools, the Western Cape Education District as well as teacher training institutions. To ensure that no children are left behind based on their social position and to address the Social Justice concerns in education, a combined effort from the aforementioned institutions is critical.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Western Cape Education Department research approval letter



Directorate: Research

meshack.kanzi@westerncape.gov.za

Tel: +27 021 467 2350

Fax: 086 590 2282

Private Bag x9114, Cape

Town, 8000 wced.wcape.gov.za **REFERENCE: 20220119-9129**

ENQUIRIES: Mr M Kanzi

Ms Nathalie Cupido
24 Faroek Street
Johnson Park
Worcester
6850

Ms Nathalie Cupido,

RESEARCH PROPOSAL: TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES ON THE FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE HOW THEY TEACH PRESCRIPTIVE CHILDREN'S LITERATURE IN GRADE 1.

Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research in schools in the Western Cape has been approved subject to the following conditions:

1. Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.
2. Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
3. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.
4. Educators' programmes are not to be interrupted.
5. The Study is to be conducted from **20 January 2022 to 30 September 2022.**
6. No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December).
7. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Mr M Kanzi at the contact numbers above, quoting the reference number.
8. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal where the intended research is to be conducted.
9. Your research will be limited to the list of schools as forwarded to the Western Cape Education Department.
10. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Research Services.
11. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:

**The Director: Research Services
Western Cape Education
Department
Private Bag X9114
CAPE TOWN
8000**

We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards,
Meshack Kanzi
Directorate: Research
DATE: 20 January 2022



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Foreshore, Cape Town 8001 Safe Schools: 0800 45 46 47 tel: +27 21 467
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APPENDIX B: CPUT ethical clearance letter



**Faculty of Education
Highbury Road
Mowbray
7700
Tel: +27 21 959 6583**

FACULTY OF EDUCATION

On **9 December 2021**, the Chairperson of the Faculty of Education Ethics Committee of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology granted ethics approval (**EFEC 2-12/2021**) to **N.A Cupido** for an MEd degree.

Title:	Teachers' perspectives on the factors that influence how they teach prescriptive children's literature in Grade 1
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Comments:

The EFEC unconditionally grants ethical clearance for this study. This clearance is valid until **31st December 2024**. Permission is granted to conduct research within the **Faculty of Education only**. Research activities are restricted to those details in the research project as outlined by the Ethics application. Any changes wrought to the described study must be reported to the Ethics committee immediately.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Zayd Waghid', is positioned above the printed name and title of the Chairperson.

Dr Zayd Waghid
Chair of the Education Faculty Ethics Committee (EFEC)
Faculty of Education

Date: 15 December 2021

APPENDIX C: Informed consent letter



Faculty of Education Ethics informed consent form

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

Category of Participants (tick as appropriate):

<i>Principals</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Teachers</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<i>Parents</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Lecturers</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Students</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Other (specify)</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>								

You are kindly invited to participate in a research study being conducted by Nathalie Cupido from the Cape Peninsula University of Technology. The findings of this study will contribute towards (tick as appropriate):

<i>An undergraduate project</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>A conference paper</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>An Honours project</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>A published journal article</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>A Masters/doctoral thesis</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<i>A published report</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Selection criteria

You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you comply with the following criteria for inclusion:

- Schools in the Western Cape:
 - Teaching at a public quintile 1 school in the Cape Winelands Education District
- Teachers must be teaching Grade 1 and must be 30 years and older

The information below gives details about the study to help you decide whether you would want to participate.

Title of the research:

Teachers' perspectives on the factors that influence how they teach prescriptive children's literature in Grade 1

A brief explanation of what the research involves:

Why is this research important?

This research is important as it will explore the perspectives of Grade 1 teachers with regard to factors that influence how they teach prescriptive children's literature. I envision that such an exploration could inform curriculum development and in addition, develop guidelines that may support Grade 1 teachers with the use of prescriptive children's literature while implementing the CAPS curriculum.

Benefits of research

As a result of your participation in this study, you could provide recommendations to teachers and teacher training institutes, and assist in informing curriculum development regarding the use of children's literature in Grade 1.

Incentives

Participants will receive a formal report on the findings of this study to compensate for their time and effort.

Procedures (duration)

Should you agree to participate, you will be requested to avail yourself for one group session where you will be required to make a visual drawing of your literacy journey and attend one individual interview. The visual drawing is called River of Life and this group session will approximately last 2 hours. In tandem with the River of Life, I will also be collecting vignettes. The individual interview will approximately be 30 minutes. During the interview questions will be directed to you to gain a perspective of your experiences, feelings, beliefs and/or thoughts with regard to the use of children's literature in your class and factors that influence how you teach prescriptive children's literature.

With your permission, the individual interviews will be recorded. The recorded interviews will be transcribed word-for-word. Your responses to the interview will be kept strictly confidential. The recordings will be stored in a safe place and only I will have access to them. The transcripts (without identifying information) will be made available to my research supervisors, a translator (if needed) and an independent coder with the sole purpose of assisting and guiding me with this research study.

Right to withdraw / voluntary

Please note that participation in the research is completely voluntary. If you agree to sign the consent form, it does not compromise your rights to participate in any way. If you agree, you still have the right to withdraw your consent at any stage during the study. However, if you do withdraw from the study, I will kindly request an opportunity to engage in an informal discussion so that the research partnership that we have established can be terminated in an orderly manner. As the researcher, I also have the right to retract you from the study if any potential risks arise.

Confidentiality and anonymity

I will have a conversation with the participant in this regard. The participant will understand that:

- He/she will have access to the results of the study;
- The participant's confidentiality and anonymity are ensured and he/she will enter this study voluntarily;
- He/she can withdraw from the study at any time;
- Only I, the translator (if needed), the independent coder and my research supervisors will have access to the data.

Potential risks, discomforts or inconveniences

The information shared by the participants has the potential to cause emotional or psychological distress. Should that occur, the participants may voluntarily withdraw from the study without penalty. Should I conclude that this exercise is harming the participants in any way, I do have the right to withdraw the participant from the study and/or refer him/her for counselling services/or other appropriate resources of service delivery available. The participant has the right to decide whether to make use of the assistance or not.

What will happen to the data when the study is completed?

After data collection has ended, consent forms will be scanned to PDF and the originals securely shredded. These PDFs along with all other data will be stored on a password-protected computer.

Kindly complete the table below before participating in the research.

Tick the appropriate column		
Statement	Yes	No
1. I understand the purpose of the research.		
2. I understand what the research requires of me.		
3. I volunteer to take part in the research.		
4. I know that I can withdraw at any time.		
5. I understand that there will not be any form of discrimination against me as a result of my participation or non-participation.		
6. Comment:		

Please sign the consent form. You will be given a copy of this form on request.

Signature of participant	Date

Researchers

	Name:	Surname:	Contact details:
1.	Nathalie	Cupido	0711608404
2.			
3.			

Contact person: Nathalie Cupido	
Contact number: 0711608408	Email: jufncupido@icloud.com

APPENDIX D: List of books

School A – Afrikaans books			
Name	Author	Publisher	Year
Gaan weg, Flappie	Roderick Hunt & Alex Brychta	Oxford University Press Southern Africa (Pty) Ltd.	2013
Die Dolfyne	Roderick Hunt & Alex Brychta	Oxford University Press Southern Africa (Pty) Ltd.	2014
Kalla se Skoene	Roderick Hunt & Alex Brychta	Oxford University Press Southern Africa (Pty) Ltd.	1999
'n Nuwe Hond	Roderick Hunt & Alex Brychta	Oxford University Press Southern Africa (Pty) Ltd.	2014
Niemand wil speel nie	Roderick Hunt & Alex Brychta	Oxford University Press Southern Africa (Pty) Ltd.	2014
Op die Strand	Roderick Hunt & Alex Brychta	Oxford University Press Southern Africa (Pty) Ltd.	2014
Rooi en Blou	Roderick Hunt & Alex Brychta	Oxford University Press 11 th edition printed by Clyson Drukkers, Cape Town	2013
Vlooi se Partytjie	Roderick Hunt & Alex Brychta	Oxford University Press Southern Africa (Pty) Ltd.	2014
Wegkruipertjie	Roderick Hunt & Alex Brychta	Oxford University Press 8 th edition printed by ABC Press	2011
School B – English / isiXhosa books			
Name	Author	Publisher	Year
Food of many colours	Tracy Blues, Gcina Mhlophe & Sindiwe Magona	Oxford University Press Southern Africa (Pty) Ltd.	2019
Silinganisa iimpahla	Department of Basic Education	Department of Basic Education	2016
Uthando lwabazali	Colleen Nonkululelo Gqamlana & Ntombokuqala Bokoloshe	Shuter & Shooter Publishers (Pty) Ltd.	2012

Uliso nabahlobo bakhe	Colleen Nonkululelo Gqamlana &	Shuter & Shooter Publishers (Pty) Ltd.	2012
	Ntombokuqala Bokoloshe		
Isikhukukazi esibomvu	Department of Basic Education	Department of Basic Education	2016
Big books with multiple stories			
Name	Author	Publisher	Year
Incwadi Enkulu yamabalana <i>Incwadi 3</i>			
1. UTshotsho ilori etiphayo	Department of Basic Education	Department of Basic Education	2016
2. Utyelelo efama	Department of Basic Education	Department of Basic Education	2016
3. Itheko lomhla wokuzalwa	Department of Basic Education	Department of Basic Education	2016
4. Sibhakela uLebo ikeyiki	Department of Basic Education	Department of Basic Education	2016
Incwadi Enkulu yamabalana <i>Incwadi 4</i>			
1. lihagwana ezintathu	Department of Basic Education	Department of Basic Education	2016
2. Isikhukukazi esibomvu	Department of Basic Education	Department of Basic Education	2016
INCwadi eNkulu			
1. Mna nosana	Gcina Mhlophe & Sindiwe Magona	Oxford University Press Southern Africa (Pty) Ltd.	2008
2. Ibhola ebomvu	Gcina Mhlophe & Sindiwe Magona	Oxford University Press Southern Africa (Pty) Ltd.	2008
3. Usuku olukhulu lukaMusa	Gcina Mhlophe & Sindiwe Magona	Oxford University Press Southern Africa (Pty) Ltd.	2008
4. Ndiswele amaphiko	Gcina Mhlophe & Sindiwe Magona	Oxford University Press Southern Africa (Pty) Ltd.	2008

APPENDIX E: River of Life Figures

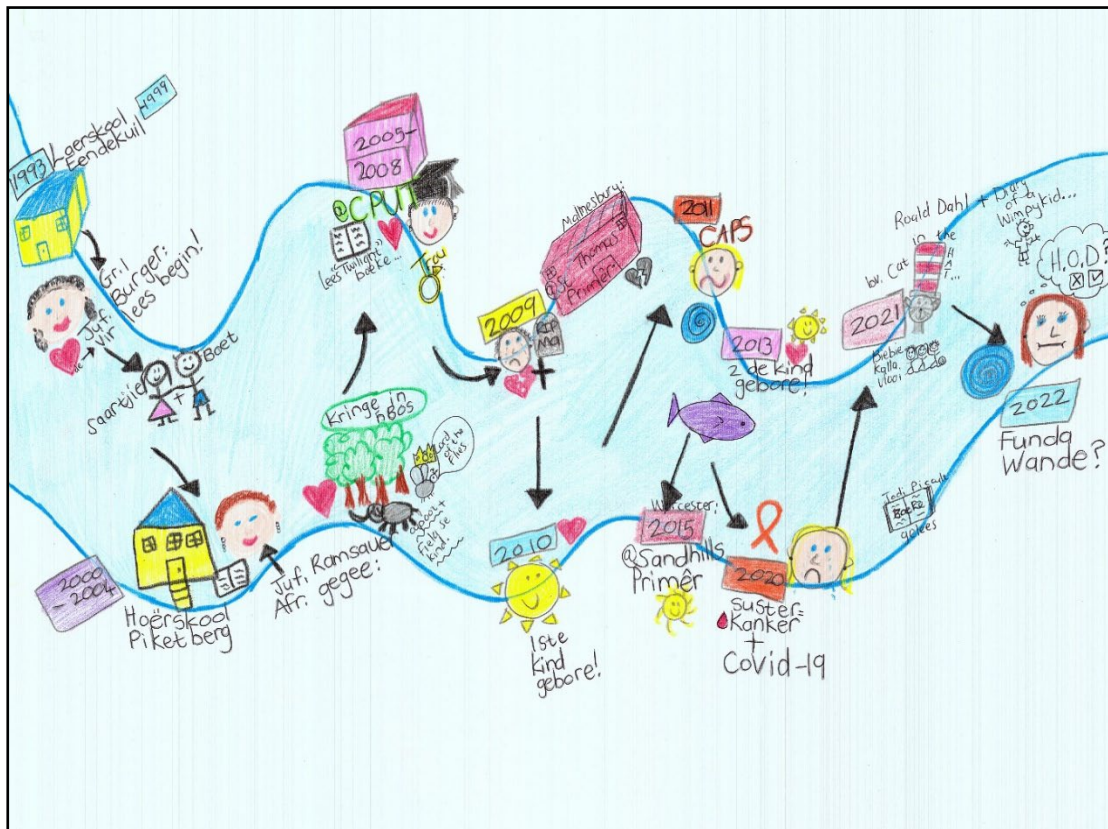


Figure 4.21: River of Life - P1



Figure 4.22: River of Life: P2



Figure 4.23: River of Life: P3



Figure 4.24: River of Life: P4

